

LINGUISTIC AND SOCIO-CULTURAL DYNAMICS  
IN  
COMPUTER-MEDIATED COMMUNICATION:  
**Identity, Intertextuality and Politics in Nigerian Internet and  
SMS Discourse**

Inaugural dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements  
for the degree Doctor of Philosophy (Dr. phil.)  
Institute of English and American Studies,  
Department of Linguistics and Literature,  
University of Osnabrück, Germany

by  
Presley Anioba Ifukor (B.A., M.Sc.)

2011

Supervisor and First Examiner: Prof. Dr. Alexander Bergs

Second Examiner: Prof. Dr. Thomas Hoffmann

Date of defence: May 25, 2011

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Truth be told: When I left Lagos for Germany in September 2003 the plan was for me to spend just two weeks in Osnabrück attending the Computational Linguistics Fall School but Providence intervened and changed the plan in remarkable ways. I can only connect the dots now looking back. Particularly, Prof. Peter Bosch was God-sent as he encouraged and gave me the moral support to apply for the Master's degree in the International Cognitive Science Programme, Osnabrück which I did and never regretted the choice. It is the same Peter Bosch who introduced me to my “Doktorvater” (my PhD supervisor), Prof. Alexander Bergs, for my eventual doctoral work. Alex Bergs' warm welcome in 2007 was amazing and since then he has ensured that Osnabrück is truly an academic home for me.

The Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst (DAAD), the German Academic Exchange Service, supported my doctoral study with grants and scholarship and I am grateful for these. I appreciate the efforts of the following friends and scholars who assisted with the administration and co-ordination of the questionnaire in Nigeria: Prof. Charles Esimone, Dr. Tunde Opeibi, Dr. Peter Elias, Dr. Rotimi Taiwo, Mr. Stephen Folaranmi and Dr. Olufemi Akinola. I am also thankful for the assistance of Dr. Kolawole Ogundari, Mr. Michael Osei and Mr. Emmanuel Balogun with the coding of the completed questionnaire. The Deeper Christian Life Ministry (DCLM) family and leadership in Niedersachsen and Bremen provided me with the right social and spiritual atmosphere for a successful completion of my postgraduate studies in Osnabrück and I am ever thankful for the fellowship and kindness of the DCLM family.

Most importantly, my indebtedness to God my Creator and Maker knows no bounds because in Him I live, move and have my being. I am proudly blessed with supportive parents (Reverend Emmanuel & Mrs Doris Ifukor) and siblings (Dan, Ezekiel, Nath, Ernest and Eunice) whose prayers, constant phone calls and words of encouragement keep me going. And I found true love in Princess Kemi, my precious Jewel and better half, in the course of the doctoral study when I needed emotional support most.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements .....	3
List of Tables .....	7
List of Figures .....	8
Die Zussammenfassung .....	9
Abstract .....	12
<b>Chapter 1: Introduction and subject matter</b>	<b>16</b>
1.1 Discursive construction of identity in electronic discourse .....	16
1.2 Research questions and hypotheses .....	25
1.3 Objectives .....	26
1.4 The structure of the present study .....	27
1.5 Preliminary theoretical considerations .....	27
1.6.1 Institutional and societal multilingualism in Nigeria .....	29
1.6.2 English and indigenous languages .....	36
1.7 Implications of the foregoing for researching .....	38
Nigerian Internet and SMS discourse	
<b>Chapter 2: Theoretical and methodological frameworks</b>	<b>41</b>
2.1 Review of the literature .....	41
2.1.1 Computer-mediated discourse analysis .....	45
2.1.2 Herring's faceted classification of computer- mediated discourse .....	48
2.1.3 Koch & Oesterreicher's model in German CMC studies .....	50
2.1.4 Nigerian CMC studies (1990 - 2010) .....	59
2.1.5 Spelling resentment and rebellion in the typographic representations of Nigerianness .....	63
2.2 Data composition methods .....	80
2.2.1 Corpora .....	80
2.2 Questionnaire .....	84

Chapter 3: Linguistic marketing in informal internet discourse	87
3.1 Background on the Nigerian Village Square .....	87
3.2 Language choice, linguistic marketing and intertextuality .....	93
3.2.1 Vertical interdiscursivity: “top – down” linguistic heterogeneity .....	98
3.3 The pragmatics of interdiscursive language choice .....	103
3.3.1 Attention-getting .....	103
3.3.2 Allusive textuality .....	108
3.3.3 Anticipated interactivity .....	110
3.3.4 Amusing phaticity .....	112
3.3.5 Affective expressivity .....	113
3.3.6 Audience affiliation (or alienation) .....	114
3.4 Conclusion .....	114
Chapter 4: Graphemic representations of phonological crossing:	
<b>marking and mocking regional accents</b>	<b>117</b>
4.1 Introduction .....	117
4.2 Language crossing as the discursive representation of ethnicity .....	118
4.3 Phonological features of regional Nigerian English accents .....	121
4.4 Politicians as experimental subjects for variation and linguistic parodies .....	125
4.5 Graphemic stylization of Nigerian casual speech features .....	127
Chapter 5: Blogging and micro-blogging the 2007 Nigerian <b>general elections</b>	<b>141</b>
5.1 Introduction .....	141
5.2 Social media technologies .....	146
5.3 Cross-continental political blogging and social networking .....	149
5.4 The socio-historical context of the 2007 Nigerian elections and thereafter .....	150
5.5 The discursive construction of bottom-up power negotiation .....	158
5.5.1 Blogging and microblogging as mobilization .....	159

5.5.2 Participatory politics .....	162
5.5.3 Bloggers and twitterers as watchdogs .....	165
5.6 Conclusion .....	166
Chapter 6: Twitter and the 2009 re-run elections in Nigeria	173
6.1 Introduction .....	173
6.2 The politico-pragmatic force of election-oriented tweet acts .....	176
6.2.1 Assertives .....	178
6.2.2 Commissives .....	180
6.2.3 Directives .....	181
6.2.4 Declarations .....	183
6.2.5 Expressives .....	184
6.3 Conclusion .....	185
Chapter 7: Interpretation of questionnaire survey results	188
7.1 Questionnaire survey results .....	188
7.1.1 Bio-data, internet access and sms texting .....	189
7.1.2 Use of the new and social media .....	193
7.1.3 Typographic choices and shortenings .....	196
7.1.4 Assessments of phonological variations .....	197
7.2 Discussions .....	201
Chapter 8: Summary and conclusion	206
8.1 Concluding discussion .....	206
8.2 Some limitations .....	213
8.3 Proposals for further research .....	213
8.4 Final comments .....	214
References	215
Appendices	233

## List of Tables

Table 1: Nigerian Ethnic Groups	31
Table 2: The medium factors of Herring's classification scheme	48
Table 3: The social factors of Herring's classification scheme	49
Table 4: Occurrences of Naija in written form from 1800 – 2000.	71
Table 5: Data composition	83
Table 6: Intertextuality and Heterogeneity of NVS Articles' Headlines	
Table 7: Realisations of consonants by Hausa speakers of NigE	124
Table 8: Igbo realisations of some consonants of NigE	125
Table 9: Yoruba realisations of some consonants of NigE	125
Table 10: Ekiti re-run elections Twitter interface and clients	148
Table 11: Summary of 2007 Elections-related Blog Posts	153
Table 12: Monthly Ekiti re-run elections' tweets	
from April 2009 to August 2009	157
Table 13: A taxonomy of political tweet acts	177
Table 14: The politico-pragmatic force of our tweets data	177

## List of Figures

Figure 1: Language Families in Nigeria .....	32
Figure 2: The co-evolution of CMC and the Internet .....	43
Figure 3: Chronological launch dates of major Social Networking Sites .....	45
Figure 4: Distribution of different communication types, based on Koch & Oesterreicher's model .....	51
Figure 5: Restructuring of the medial dimension (Dürscheid, 2003) .....	52
Figure 6: Zitzen's (2004) proposed nomenclature .....	53
Figure 7: Zitzen's (2004) incorporated nomenclature .....	54
Figure 8: Dürscheid's (2003) proposed synchronous, quasi-synchronous and asynchronous communication .....	55
Figure 9: Dürscheid's proposed extension .....	55
Figure 10: Typographic occurrences of 'naija' and 'nigeria' in written documents .....	70
Figure 11: NVS Main Square notice on February 9, 2009 .....	91



## **DIE ZUSAMMENFASSUNG**

Neue Medien und mobile Technologien haben öffentliche Bereiche für die persönliche Selbstdarstellung und soziale Interaktion, aber auch für internationale und interkulturelle Strömungen und die Verschmelzung von Ideologien (Pennycook 2007) geschaffen, und damit eine Vielzahl an nicht regulierten Bereichen (Sebba 2009b) hervorgebracht. Die diskursiven sowie interaktiven Möglichkeiten mobiler und web 2.0-basierter Technologien bieten so Plattformen für Computervermittelte Kommunikation (CMC), d.h. techno-linguistische Bereiche für den virtuellen Austausch und Gespräche. Linguistische Kontexte dieser Art sind der ideale Nährboden für Online-Mehrsprachigkeit und Sprachkontakt. Viele Nigerianer im In- und Ausland machen Gebrauch von CMC Technologien um miteinander zu interagieren – um förderliche Ideen zur Verbesserung Nigerias auszutauschen und um Abhilfe für sozio-politische Probleme zu schaffen. Die Arbeit untersucht den sprachlichen Aufbau von Nigerianern verfassten Kurznachrichten und den Ausdruck von „Nigerianness“ (Chiluwa 2008) und Nigerianismen im digitalen Diskurs.

Die Dissertation ist in vier, jeweils zwei Kapitel umfassende Teile geteilt. Der erste Teil führt anhand der Untersuchung von Sprache und Identität in der typographischen Darstellung von ‚Nigerianness‘ in den Forschungsgegenstand und –schwerpunkt ein. Hierbei werden als theoretische Basis die relevanten Aspekte der ‚discursive work‘ zugrunde gelegt (e.g. Benwell & Stokoe 2006; Bucholz & Hall 2005; De Fina, Schiffrin & Bamberg 2006; Le Page & Tabouret-Keller 1985; Iltis & Watt 2010); Der zweite Teil befasst sich mit dem Thema ‚Internet-Codeswitching und ‚Language Crossing‘: Der dritte Teil der Arbeit ist der dialektalen Beziehung von Sprache, neuen Medientechnologien und Politik gewidmet. Der vierte und letzte Teil stellt die Ergebnisse der Fragebogenstudie und die sich daraus ergebenden Forschungsergebnisse vor.

Die Arbeit untersucht auf innovative Weise Sprachkontaktmerkmale in nigerianischer computervermittelter Kommunikation getreu Bourdieus (1977) Ökonomien des linguistischen Austauschs und Faircloughians Anwendung von Intertextualität im Sinne Bakhtins. ‚Linguistisches Marketing‘ bezieht sich hierbei auf den Diskurs als Mittel für ‚verkaufsfördernde Maßnahmen‘ und den Verkauf bestimmter Kulturen und Ideologien an ein multikulturelles und mehrsprachiges Publikum. Eine Interpretation dieses Prozesses ist die Sicherung sprachlicher Rechte und sprachlicher Gleichberechtigung. Der Gebrauch nigerianischer Sprachen zusammen mit Nigerianischem Pidgin in Online Kontexten wird dabei werbewirksam für wichtige Verhandlungen eingesetzt. Die hieraus resultierende Sprachmischung ist dabei Ausdruck von Redefreiheit, Freiheit der Sprachalternation und Freiheit zum Sprachwechsel. Die der Sprachmischung und Sprachalternation zugrundeliegende pragmatische Motivation in virtuellem nigerianischem Diskurs ist das Gewinnen von Aufmerksamkeit mit dem Ziel einen kognitiven wie kommunikativen Austausch herbeizuführen. Andere pragmatische Funktionen des Code Switchings die in der Arbeit diskutiert werden, umfassen ‚allusive textuality‘, ‚amusing phaticity‘, ‚anticipated interactivity‘, ‚affective expressivity‘ sowie ‚audience affiliation‘ oder ‚alienation‘. Intertextualität ist somit ein Erklärungsmodell um bislang unerforschte Phänomene des digitalen Code-Switchings zu untersuchen. Ramptons (1995) Konzeptualisierung des Language Crossings wird dabei zur Hilfe genommen um die graphemischen Abbildung phonologischer Variation im nigerianischen Englisch zu erklären.

Zusätzlich werden im Sinne einer aussagekräftigen Erklärung relevante Aspekte interaktionaler ‚discourse acts‘ mit der Speech Act Theory (SAT) (Austin 1962, Searle 1969) verbunden und in die Theorie der Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) eingebettet, um unsere datenbasierten, auf Wahl ausgerichteten, politisch-pragmatischen Tweets in Anlehnung an das, was wir als ‚Good Governance Maxims‘ (GGM) bezeichnen, zu erstellen. Als letzter Punkt ist zu bemerken, dass

es in der Arbeit zwei Arten von Daten verwendet werden: (i) Korpusdaten (**INEC** ‚Informal Nigerian Electronic Texts‘ zusammen mit **PLANET** ‚Purposeful Language Alternation in Nigerian Electronic Texts‘) und (ii) eine Fragebogen-Studie. Die Offline-Befragung von 1,154 nigerianischen Bachelor Studenten veranschaulicht wie Computer-Mediated Discourse Analysis (CMDA) durch eine soziolinguistische Studie ergänzt werden kann. Androutsopoulos (2006:424) bezeichnet dieses als „the observation of Internet use in offline social space“.

## ABSTRACT

New media and mobile technologies have opened up numerous 'unregulated spaces' (Sebba, 2009b) and public spheres for self expression, interpersonal interactions as well as the transnational transcultural flow and fusion of ideologies (Pennycook, 2007). The discursive and interactive possibilities of mobile and Web 2.0 technologies make computer-mediated communication (CMC) platforms techno-linguistic environments for virtual deliberation and discussions. Online multilingualism and contact phenomena easily flourish in such contexts.

Many Nigerians at home and abroad are embracing the CMC technologies to interact with one another, to negotiate profitable ideas for the betterment of Nigeria and to redress endemic socio-political issues. This study examines the linguistic construction of textual messages by Nigerians and the sociocultural manifestations of 'Nigerianness' (Chiluwa, 2008) and Nigerianisms in digital discourse. The dissertation is divided into four parts, each comprising two chapters. Part I introduces the subject matter and research focus, with an examination of language and identity in the typographical representations of Nigerianness by theoretically using relevant aspects of discursive work (e.g. Benwell & Stokoe, 2006; Bucholtz & Hall, 2005; De Fina, Schiffrin & Bamberg, 2006; Le Page & Tabouret-Keller, 1985; Llamas & Watt, 2010); Part II is concerned with the theme of Internet code switching and language crossing; Part III addresses the dialectical connection of language, new media technologies and politics; while Part IV presents the questionnaire survey results and research findings.

The study innovatively examines language contact features in Nigerian CMC in terms of Bourdieu's (1977) economics of linguistic exchanges and the Faircloughian (1992) application of intertextuality in the Bakhtinian spirit. By

linguistic marketing is meant discourse as a vehicle for 'promotional acts' and for 'selling' particular cultures and ideologies to multicultural and multilingual readers/audiences. One interpretation of this is in terms of asserting language rights and linguistic equality. Therefore, the use of Nigerian languages with Nigerian Pidgin online is promotional and for *existential* negotiation. This results in language mixture which is an instantiation of freedom of speech, freedom of switch and the freedom to switch. The underlying pragmatic motivation for top-down language mixture and alternation in Nigerian virtual discourse is attention-getting with the aim of inducing an interdiscursive writer-reader cognitive as well as communicative interactions. Other pragmatic functions of code switching discussed in the study include allusive textuality, amusing phaticity, anticipated interactivity, affective expressivity, and audience affiliation or alienation. Thus, intertextuality is an explanatory technique for investigating previously unexplored phenomena in digital code switching. Rampton's (1995) conceptualisation of language crossing is used to explicate the graphemic representations of variation in Nigerian English phonology.

Additionally, for the sake of explanatory exigency, relevant aspects of speech acts theory (SAT) (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969) are fused with critical discourse analysis (CDA) for the construction of our data-derived, election-oriented, politico-pragmatic tweet acts, in terms of what we call Good Governance Maxims (GGM). Finally, there are two types of data employed in the study: (i) corpus (**INEC** i.e. Informal Nigerian Electronic Communication with **PLANET** - Purposeful Language Alternation in Nigerian Electronic Texts) and (ii) questionnaire survey. The random sampling of 1,154 Nigerian undergraduates offline illustrates how computer-mediated discourse analysis (CMDA) can be supplemented by a sociolinguistic survey in what Androutsopoulos (2006:424) calls “the observation of Internet use in offline social spaces” through a blend of on- and offline ethnography.

# Part I

The typographical representations of the proper noun 'Nigeria' have generated some generational debates between older and younger Nigerians. Chapter 1 approaches the matter from the point of view of the discursive construction, enactment and establishment of identity through semiotic and linguistic resources. Thus, it is a matter of language and identity. According to Brown (1993:84), “orthography is itself a presentation of oneself, one's identity” and in reality “variant spellings may encode conflicting discourses of identity” (Romaine, 2002:191). Of a truth, it is through the writing and use of language in digital communication that sociocultural identity is signalled and shared (Herring, 2004). Hence, much importance is attached to the *identity implications* of *what* is written in electronic discourse and *how* it is written. As also noted by Sebba (2007a: 6), typographic or spelling choice is “where issues of language as a formal object and of language as a social and cultural phenomenon intersect. It touches on matters of social identity, national identity, cultural politics, representation and voice”.

In Chapter 2, the state of the art of computer-mediated communication (CMC) and Nigerian Internet research is discussed. The chapter also expatiates on the theoretical and methodological frameworks in CMC.

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION AND SUBJECT MATTER

Linguistic features that index social groups or activities appear to be *iconic representations* of them, as if a linguistic feature somehow depicted or displayed a social group's inherent nature or essence.  
– (Irvine & Gal, 2000; italics added)

Scripts are not merely tools for written communication; they are treasured, deeply entrenched ethnocultural and ethnoreligious symbols and enactments.  
– (Joshua Fishman, 1997)

### 1.1 DISCURSIVE CONSTRUCTION OF IDENTITY IN ELECTRONIC DISCOURSE

The subject matter of this thesis shall be introduced with excerpts from an article written in the Nigerian *Guardian* newspaper on June 21, 2009 and re-published on July 5, 2009 due to widespread reactions and popular demand. It was titled “A Nation's Identity Crisis” and written by one of Nigeria's foremost columnists, Reuben Abati, who is also the chairman of the editorial board of the *Guardian*. Excerpts from the article relevant to our discussion are below:

You may not have noticed it: Nigeria is suffering from an identity crisis imposed on it in part by an emergent generation of irreverent and creative young Nigerians who are revising old norms and patterns. And for me nothing demonstrates this more frontally than *the gradual change of the name of the country*.

... [T]hese days, the name Nigeria is gradually being replaced by so many variants, that I am afraid a new set of Nigerians may in the immediate future not even know the correct spelling of the name of their country. For these Nigerians whose lives revolve mostly around the internet and the blogosphere, the name Nigeria has been thrown out of the window. Our dear country is now "naija" or "nija". What happened to the "-eria" ... ? The new referents for Nigeria are now creeping into writings, conversations, and internet discourse. I am beaten flat by the increasing re-writing of the country's name not only as naija or nija, but consider this: "9ja". Or this other name for Nigeria: "gidi". There is even a television programme that is titled "Nigerzie". In addition, Etisalat, a telecom company has since adopted



a marketing platform that is titled: "0809ja." Such mainstreaming of these new labels is alarming.

This obviously is the age of abbreviations. The emerging young generation lacks the discipline or the patience to write complete sentences or think through a subject to its logical end. It is a generation in a hurry, it feels the constraints of space so much, it has to reduce everything to manageable, cryptic forms. This is what the e-mail and text message culture has done to the popular consciousness. Older generations of Nigerians brought up on a culture of correctness and completeness [sic] may never get used to the re-writing of Nigeria as "9ja". Language is mutatory, but referring to the motherland or the fatherland in slang terms may point to a certain meaninglessness or alienation. What's in a name? In Africa, names are utilitarian constructs not merely labels.

[...]

The prevalent mood is as expressed by Dj-Zeez: "ori e 4 ka sibe, 4 ka sibe": an epigrammatic, onomatopoeic, market-driven diminution of language as vehicle and sign. What kind of people are we? A dancing nation? Dancing and *writing away* our frustrations and caring little about sense, in this country that is now known as "naija", "nija", "9ja", "nigerzie," "gidi"? (italics not in original)

To start with, the tone of the message is one of exasperation with the digital representations of the country's name "Nigeria" in electronically-mediated discourse. Abati's angst is particularly directed at young Nigerians who are perceived as the unpatriotic generation of Nigerians who, through their writing practices, are bent on distorting the conventional denotation of the country's name and thus tarnishing the 'image' of the country. Mis-spelling or re-spelling Nigeria 'unconventionally' is worrisome to Abati (2009) because this is attributable to indolence, indiscipline, indecency and the evident display of shallowness of mind characteristic of uncultured people. The author considers it inappropriate to alter in any way the country's official referential graphemes. He contrasts the patriotism and sense of decorum of the older generation of Nigerians who pride themselves in maintaining the status quo to the unsanctioned creativity of young people. It is deducible that the main argument of the article is conceiving *orthography as the means for identity construction and representation* which is one of the themes of this study. Abati's argument may be

ideologically grounded by his insinuation that “variant spellings may encode conflicting discourses of identity” (Romaine, 2002:191) and therefore arguing that the 'standard' referential graphemes of the country's nominal identity be retained without any form of distortion or desecration. He tends to echo Brown's (1993:84) view that “orthography is itself a presentation of oneself, one's identity.” Actually, it is through the writing and use of language in digital communication that sociocultural identity is signalled and shared (Herring, 2004). Hence, much importance is attached to the *identity implications* of what is written in electronic discourse and how it is written, due to the lack of non-verbal and paralinguistic cues that usually accompany face-to-face speech interactions. In this virtual environment, linguistic and non-linguistic symbols of expression have “market values” (Bourdieu, 1977) and words, in particular, constitute a crucial form of “cultural capital” (Sveningsson, 2002) for identity work. Moreover, symbols and words are the kernels for the construction and negotiation of identities in electronic discourse. In the words of Castells (1996:3),

In a world of global flows of wealth, power, and images, the search for identity, collective or individual, ascribed or constructed, becomes the fundamental source of social meaning. This is not a new trend, since identity, and particularly religious and ethnic identity, have been at the roots of meaning since the dawn of human society. Yet identity is becoming the main, and sometimes the only, source of meaning in a historical period characterized by widespread destructuring of organizations, delegitimation of institutions, fading away of major social movements, and ephemeral cultural expressions. People increasingly organize their meaning not around what they do but on the basis of what they are.

Relating the above assertion to Abati (2009), what Nigeria is can be deciphered by the choice of graphemes used to represent the country. And with his ideological stance, the Nigerian columnist has touched on a number of issues related to the subject matter of this study: the intersection of language, culture, society and technology. In short message service (SMS) texting and web-based textual discourse, semiotic devices are the means for constructing and negotiating individual, national, cultural or any other form of social identities.

Representations of affiliation constitute, as Mendoza-Denton (2002:475) puts it, the active negotiation of an individual's relationship with larger social constructs, in so far as this negotiation is signalled *through language and other semiotic means*. Identity, then, is neither attribute nor possession, but an individual and collective-level *process* of semiosis (italics added).

The present study is an investigation in the field of computer-mediated communication (CMC) and Internet research. Exploring discourse specific aspects of CMC has led to the specification of the disciplinary term 'computer-mediated discourse' (CMD) by Herring (2001), otherwise referred to as technologically-mediated discourse (TMD) by Thurlow (2003), electronically-mediated communication (EMC) by Baron (2008), or simply as electronic discourse (ED) by Davis & Brewer (1997). While CMC will be used as an umbrella term in this study, CMD, ED, EMC and TMD shall be regarded as broadly interchangeable terms.

Quite a few definitions of CMC exist in the literature, but Walther's (1992) and Herring's (2007) are adopted in this study. Whereas Walther (1992:52) defines it as “synchronous or asynchronous electronic mail and computer conferencing, by which senders encode in text messages that are relayed from senders' computers to receivers”, Herring (2007) extends the concept to include mobile telephony by stating that CMC is “predominantly text-based human-human interaction mediated by networked computers or mobile telephony”. Both definitions emphasise the textual aspect of the communicative interaction and accommodate all forms of textual language use mediated by the Internet and mobile technologies. This approach to CMC focuses on the production, transmission and exchange of naturally-occurring text-based human language and highlights the fact that human beings (as opposed to automated or artificial systems) are both the agents or initiators and recipients of the communication under investigation.

Text-based CMC, in this wise, then refers to the production of human language

mostly in typed form (comprising alphanumeric characters), *visually displayed* on a computer or mobile phone screen(s) and the dissemination of such via networked computers or wireless technologies. If the message is read in real-time and an instantaneous response is given, it is called synchronous CMC (because both or all interlocutors are simultaneously online), whereas if the message is read or responded to at a later time, it is asynchronous CMC (because the recipient(s) is/are offline when the message is sent). Therefore, the timing of message receipt and/or response is very crucial to the synchronicity versus asynchronicity of CMC. Real-time interaction fosters synchronicity just as delayed-time correspondence relates to asynchronicity. Synchronous CMC includes Internet Relay Chat (IRC), instant messaging (IM) and ICQ ('I Seek You'), while examples of asynchronous CMC include email, listserv, weblog (blog), online discussion forums and SMS text messaging.

Suffice it to say that Duman & Locher (2008) and Harley & Fitzpatrick (2009) represent non-textual CMC research: video blogging (vlogging) or YouTube asynchronous conversational interactions. In April 2009, a conference was held at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst on “YouTube and the US 2008 Election Cycle” which resulted in a special issue of the *Journal of Information Technology and Politics* (2010). Political campaigns, electoral debates, crisis and natural disasters are major sites for viral videos<sup>1</sup>.

Although communication is not unique to humans, the ability to use human language for meaningful social interactions is the exclusive preserve of the human species. Thus, the cognitive capabilities and perspectives human beings bring to virtual interactions are accounted for in CMC. Internet interlocutors (also

---

<sup>1</sup> According to Wikipedia (28 December 2010, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Viral\\_video](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Viral_video)), “A viral video is any video that's passed electronically, from person to person, regardless of its content ... becomes popular through the process of Internet sharing, typically through video sharing websites and email. ... Humor is often a characteristic of viral videos, but not a defining one. The availability of inexpensive video editing and publishing tools allows video shot on mobile phones to be edited and distributed virally, by email or website, and between phones by Bluetooth or MMS. These consumer-shot videos are typically non-commercial, intended for viewing by friends or family.”

known as online interactants, *netizens* or *textizens* in the case of regular SMS texts composers / senders) employ textual data to convey and exchange their thoughts, opinions, observations, feelings as well as messages from other people or sources. These interactive possibilities make CMC a technology, medium, and engine of social relations (Jones, 1995:11) and language use is at the core. In pursuance of the thematic concerns of this study, language choice and use online will be situated within the technological, sociocultural and political contexts which shape their occurrence and transmission (Danet & Herring, 2007). The present form of modern text technology is bound to affect individuals and nations both socially and culturally because new media and communication technologies in the first decade of this 21st century are fundamentally influencing the typing, transformation and speedy transmission of text-based virtual communication with noticeable spelling and typographical peculiarities in informal electronic communication. Technologically-savvy men and women are exploiting the full potentials of networked computers, mobile phones and related digital communication devices as regards the visual display of texts on the screen for both personal and interpersonal communication. Information sharing and the way people interact with other members of society are also being affected by the possibilities of Web 2.0 technologies (e.g. Weblog, Twitter, Facebook) which constitute a new wave of the new media and necessitate specialised / new linguistic practices.

According to Manovich (2001:20), “new media represents a convergence of two separate historical trajectories: computing and media technologies”. Computing is the heartbeat of modern communication technologies be they through wired or wireless devices (mobile phones included). Computer science terms, categories and operations provide the means for understanding data processing in electronically-mediated discourse. In this regard, the basic principles of new media information processing are numerical representation, modular structure of media texts, automation, variability in content and storage, and cultural

transcoding (Manovich, 2001). All these happen via the instrumentality of human language by humans for interpersonal communication and virtual representation of ideologies in human society.

Apart from identity issues, stereotypical sentiments similar to Abati's about the effect of young people's e-discourse on language itself is cross-continental. Jon Katz (quoted in Hale, 1996:9 & Herring, 2001) has said that digital discourse gives rise to “a whole new fractured language – definitely not as elegant or polished as English used to be” ; Thurlow (2006) cites numerous sources with the same stance such as that “The English language is being beaten up, civilization is in danger of crumbling” (The Observer, 7 March 2004); and Bob Levey (24 May 2000) gives the title of his article in The Washington Post as “On the Internet, Spelling is a Disaster”. Contrary to the palpable pessimism expressed by Abati (2009) and others, Nigerian online interactants (young or old) can adapt to the spelling trends associated with electronically-mediated discourse especially as these trends are gaining popularity. Just as young people are usually the vanguard of most language changes (Wardhaugh, 1998:202) and cultural innovations (Greenfield, 1999), they are also the most native speakers and users of the so-called Cyberspeak, Netspeak or Textspeak (Greenfield & Subrahmanyam, 2003). Therefore, they are the architects of simplification in electronic discourse lexis and lects, and they are at the forefront of the propagation.

The spelling peculiarities of CMC are less of errors caused by inattention or lack of the knowledge of standard forms (Herring, 1998). Rather, graphemic representations of language in CMC are intentional and are mostly “deliberate choices made by users to economize on typing effort, mimic spoken language features, or express themselves creatively” (Herring, 2001). The ease with which creativity is enhanced in electronic discourse and the innovative dispositions of youths make online platforms appealing to the youths because these afford them “a place to have a voice, to engage in important identity work, and to create texts

around local, national and global issues that are important to them” (McGinnis, Goodstein-Stolzenberga and Saliania, 2007).

Abati (2009) and the like remind one of academic enterprises in the prescriptivism versus descriptivism schools of thought. Language purists who stress correctness above the characterisation of actual language in use are bound to be hyper-corrective in their stance to contemporary CMC writing. We are of the position that differences in approaches to how textual CMC should be viewed are rooted in ideological orientations. As sociocultural linguists, preference is given to “graphematics” as an umbrella terminology for characterising the novelty, neologisms and creativity in CMC. Prescriptivists' preoccupation with “orthography” explains why these scholars have failed to accept non-conventional spellings as part of the dynamism of linguistic systems. Etymologically, the word “orthography” implies the notion of normativity whereas “graphematics” implies the concept of a linguistic system (Weingarten, 2008). Therefore, abandoning “orthography” for “graphematics” allows for a descriptive examination of how digital texts are encoded and represented in CMC. We align with the use of graphematics and “grapheme” as suitable in textual CMC because according to Stetson (1937:45),

The unit of writing may be called the grapheme; although often used to represent phonemes, it is not a mere parallel to speech. Much is written that is not pronounced, in music, in the formulae of Mathematics and of the physical sciences, and in the complex ideograms of the Chinese. Nor does our writing correspond precisely to the 'sounds'. In English the same character may represent several different phonemes and a well defined phoneme may be represented by two graphemes as in the case of 'th' and 'ph'.

In light of this explanation, graphemic analyses of CMC are more descriptive than prescriptive in nature, and this is the approach of this study. Linguistic creativity in textual CMC is then regarded as graphemic ingenuity because language is dynamic and carries the symbolic burden of reflecting the present

techno-cultural realities of its users. In an age of information explosion with ontologically-induced user flexibility, the graphemic representations of names or concepts “become powerful symbols of identification and cultural association” (Coulmas, 1991:227). Multimodality, multiliteracy and multiple perspective taking are essential traits for the 'global' citizen (Maira, 2004:227) which Nigerian netizens discursively appropriate themselves towards. Therefore non-conventional spellings by Nigerians should be regarded as attempts to use global media and modalities to encode local values and to transmit indigenous social constructs.

Three issues the Nigerian columnist highlights which form some of the thematic concerns of this study are: orthographical / graphemic representations of social identity, text technology in an age of information revolution, and the localization of global products (e.g. email, Internet, text messaging, hip-hop). Therefore, this study is precisely an investigation of discursive and representational semiotics in text-based Nigerian CMC as linked to global trends in digital discourse.

It is common knowledge that a triadic combination of the technological acumen, economic stamina and political might of world powers (e.g. the United States of America and the United Kingdom) is the force behind the globalisation of “Inner Circle” varieties of English (Kachru, 1985) and the exportation of certain cultural norms. The flow of these Englishes and cultures tend to follow an institutionalized top-down pattern. Unlike institutionalized patterns of globalisation, the bottom-up projection of local ideologies to the global scene is mostly decentralized, and there are at least three outlets for globalising Nigerianness and Nigerianisms in the first decade of the 21st century. These are 'Nollywood' (the Nigerian home video film; cf. Ezejideaku & Ugwu, 2009), Nigerian hip-hop (Babalola & Taiwo, 2009; Omoniyi, 2006) and textual Nigerian CMC (Awonusi, 2004; 2010; Chilawa, 2008; 2010; Taiwo, 2008; 2010). The present study only explores Nigerian CMC.



## 1.2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESES

The specific questions that arise from the foregoing and others which constitute the research focus of this study are as follows:

1. How and why has typography become an issue of national identity discourse in Nigeria?
2. Code switching is a default linguistic habit of bi/multilingual Nigerians. So, how can the socio-pragmatics of language choice and contact phenomena in informal electronic discourse be theoretically accounted for?
3. What is the dialectical relationship of language, new media technologies and politics in the Nigerian 2007-2010 electoral/democratic process?

Answering these questions require a combination of linguistic, socio-cultural, political, technological and multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks. Therefore, the hypothesis for each of the questions respectively is:

- (a) Typography is an identity matter because of the domestication/appropriation of globalised graphemic innovations / writing practices by Nigerian netizens and textizens (especially the youth), with creativity induced by medium constraints of new media and mobile technologies (Bergs, 1999, 2006, 2009).
- (b) Intertextuality, and by extension interdiscursivity, is an explanatory technique for modelling the pragmatics of linguistic heterogeneity in electronic discourse.

- (c) The discursive and interactive possibilities of Web 2.0 and mobile technologies create avenues for a virtual sphere among Nigerians for democratization.

In addition to these hypotheses, a central argument in this study is that typographic choices have social meaning because they can be used to communicate sociocultural affiliation and identity (Androutsopoulos, 2004). Danet (2001) documents how the Internet has enabled the appropriation of typography on the Web because identity is discursive and thus typography is indexical of social identity. We wish to state also that the proficiency and literacy level of netizens in languages in their linguistic repertoire will determine the quantity of languages used by them in electronic discourse. Therefore, a ranking of languages according to their frequency of usage for Nigerian netizens/textizens would be as follows:

English > Nigerian Pidgin > Yoruba > Igbo > Hausa > Others.

### **1.3 OBJECTIVES**

From the research questions and hypotheses, the objectives of the study include doing the following :

- I. Examine the intersection of language, culture and new media technologies in informal Nigerian electronic discourse.
- II. Explore the appropriation of Web 2.0 and mobile technologies for locally-situated identity work and discursive practices.
- III. Theoretically explain how language use in online discourse with text messaging generates the space of possibility for social and political acts.

IV. Illustrate how computer-mediated discourse analysis (CMDA) can be supplemented with a sociolinguistic survey in what Androutsopoulos (2006:424) calls “the observation of Internet use in offline social spaces” in a blend of on- and offline ethnography.

#### **1.4 THE STRUCTURE OF THE PRESENT STUDY**

This dissertation is divided into four parts, each comprising two chapters. Part I introduces the subject matter and research focus, with an examination of language and identity in the typographical representations of Nigerianness; Part II is concerned with the theme of Internet code switching and language crossing; Part III addresses the dialectical connection of language, new media technologies and politics; while Part IV presents the questionnaire survey results and research findings.

#### **1.5 PRELIMINARY THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Discursive identity work derives from a number of discursive phenomena in several disciplines such as discursive psychology (Edwards and Potter, 1992), discursive sociology (Bilmes, 1986) and discursive pragmatics (Kasper, 2006). Moving beyond the representational semiotics of virtual texts, a discursive approach is adopted in this study for investigating social, cultural and linguistic identities in communicative interactions (e.g. monologues, dialogues and polylogues) because there is a tacit rejection of essentialism in interactional sociolinguistic scholarship on identity (e.g. Bucholtz & Hall, 2005; Omoniyi, 2010; Romaine, 1984) premised on the basic definition of identity as “the

systematic establishment and signification, between individuals, between collectives, and between individuals and collectives, of relationships of similarity and difference” (Jenkins, 1996: 4).

Identity in interaction has always been an area of interest to sociolinguists and sociologists (Labov, 1966, 1972; Fishman, 1972). However, its construction and negotiation in communicative settings has proven to be a fruitful research enterprise in discourse analysis (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005; Le Page & Tabouret-Keller, 1985; Sebba, 2007b; Sebba & Wootton, 1998). In multilingual communities, several contact phenomena such as borrowing, code switching and 'crossing' are employed as discourse strategies to index the social, ethnic and cultural identities of bi/multilinguals (Bailey, 2000; Gafaranga, 2001; Gumperz, 1982; Greer, 2001; Montes-Alcalá, 2007; Le Page & Tabouret-Keller, 1985; Rampton, 1995). Owing to the increasing penetration of information and communication technologies as well as social networking possibilities, similar identity work is being transferred to online discourse (Androutopoulos, 2007; Chilwa, 2010; Hinrichs, 2006; Montes-Alcalá, 2007; Paolillo, 1996; Sebba, 2007b). Therefore, one of the arguments of this project is that specific elements of language can be used to index and co-construct<sup>2</sup> multiple identities through a variety of linguistic strategies and processes (De Fina, Schiffrin & Bamberg, 2006).

The current trends in linguistic approaches to the study of identity are those which opine and support the notion that

identity is a process that (1) takes place in concrete and specific interactional occasions, (2) yields constellations of identities instead of individual, monolithic constructs, (3) does not simply emanate from the individual, but results from processes of negotiation, and entextualization ... that are eminently social, and entails (4) “discursive work” (De Fina, Schiffrin &

---

<sup>2</sup> By co-construction, we mean “the joint creation of a form, interpretation, stance, action, activity, identity, institution, skill, ideology, emotion, or other culturally meaningful reality” (Jacoby and Ochs, 1995:171).

Bamberg, 2006:2).

Analytically, such approaches highlight the interactional perspective of identity. That is, identity is not a pre-discursive or fixed concept. Rather, it is emergent in linguistic interactions and discursively realised. Discursive conceptualisations of identity enable linguists to describe identity as “a fluid, dynamic and shifting process” (Benwell and Stokoe, 2006:34). Theoretically, the identity work is drawn largely from Bucholtz & Hall's (2005) and Le Page & Tabouret-Keller's (1985) analyses of identities in linguistic interactions. Bucholtz & Hall (2005) outline five principles for the enunciation of identity: first, the EMERGENCE principle stipulates that identity is a discursive construct that emerges in interactions; second, the POSITIONALITY principle holds that identities encompass global, local and interactional stances in relation to culture-specific positions discourse participants take; third, INDEXICALITY is the mechanism participants employ and exploit to create meanings in social contexts; fourth, the RELATIONALITY principle posits that identities are intersubjectively constructed through multiple, overlapping dimensions such as similarity / difference, genuineness / artifice and authority / delegitimacy; and finally, the PARTIALNESS principle operates on the premise that any construction of identity is relatively incomplete because of the situatedness of identity construction and negotiation. Relevant principles from the above shall be used to illustrate acts of linguistic and cultural identity co-construction “through the use of particular words or the grammar of specific language varieties” (Sebba & Tate, 2002). A discursive approach to language and identity has the added advantage of benefiting from multidisciplinary traditions and multimodal frameworks.

### **1.6.1 INSTITUTIONAL AND SOCIETAL MULTILINGUALISM IN NIGERIA**

The Revised National Policy on Education (1989:12, Section 8) states that:

Government considers it to be in the interest of national unity that each child should be encouraged to learn one of the three major languages other than

his own mother-tongue. In this connection, the Government considers the three major languages in Nigeria to be Hausa, Ibo and Yoruba.

Multilingualism in Nigeria is institutional and societal because Nigeria as an entity is a federation of ethnically and culturally diverse people. Similarly, the country is a linguistically diversified entity with over 400 indigenous languages and over 250 ethnic groups (Akinnaso, 1989; Adegbija, 2004b). In reality, culture and ethnicity intersect in many aspects of life for Nigerians and it has been said that the linguistic ecology of Nigeria is a microcosm of language typology in Africa (Akinnaso, 1989; Adegbija, 2004a; 2004b; Salami, 2004; Simpson & Oyetade, 2007). African languages are commonly grouped into four language phyla: Niger-Congo, Nilo-Saharan, Afro-Asiatic and Khoisan. Three of these (i.e. Niger-Congo, Nilo-Saharan and Afro-Asiatic) are represented in Nigeria. English is the first official language in Nigeria while French became the second official language in 1998. As the official language, English is the language of education, government, commerce, politics and other national as well as international social functions in the country. Thus, English is used in the country with the numerous indigenous languages. The indigenous languages are usually sub-divided into major and minor languages depending on the number of speakers. In this regard, Hausa (the dominant language in the north), Yoruba (dominant in the south-western area) and Igbo (dominant in the south-eastern region of the country) are the major or decamillionaire languages while other languages are in the minority. Interestingly, there is a strong sense of association of language with ethnicity and nationalism by Nigerians although attitudinal dispositions to ethno-linguistic relations among the three major ethnic groups-cum-languages vary considerably (Salami, 2004).

The breakdown in Table 1 shows the demography of Nigeria along ethnic lines, but the statistics are those of only ethnic groups with more than 1% of the Nigerian populace.

Table 1: *Nigerian Ethnic Groups*

Group	% of population	
	Badru (1998:3) <sup>3</sup>	CIA, The World Factbook <sup>4</sup> (September 8, 2010)
Hausa-Fulani	29.5	29
Yoruba	20.3	21
Igbo	16.6	18
Kanuri	4.1	4.0
Ibibio	3.6	3.5
Tiv	2.5	2.5
Ijaw	2.0	10
Edo	1.7	–
Nupe	1.2	–
all others	17.5	–

Comparing Badru's (1998) and the CIA's (2010) statistics, not much appears to have changed in the composition of the three major ethnic groups in the last decade. The difference between data from both studies is the acknowledgement of increase in the percentage of the Ijaw people and non-inclusion of those of the Edo, Nupe and other groups in the CIA's as Badru did.

Geographically, there is a pattern of spread of the major multi-million languages (Hausa, predominantly in the north; Igbo, in the south east and Yoruba, in the south west) and the millionaire-speaker languages (regarded by the Federal Government of Nigeria as radio broadcast or network languages) with a pocket of other numerous minority languages. The government's media millionaire languages, apart from the mega-three, are Edo, Efik, Fulfude, Idoma, Igala, Ijo, Kanuri, Nupe and Tiv. And there are orthographies for the mega and media languages (Okedara & Okedara, 1992).

<sup>3</sup> Badru, Pade (1998) *Imperialism and Ethnic Politics in Nigeria*, Asmara: African Press Incorporation.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ni.html> (Last accessed on September 22, 2010)

An inventory of the Nigerian indigenous languages and their language families can be found in Blench (2005) and Crozier & Blench (1992). Blench (1998) shows the genetic distribution of the language families in Figure 1:

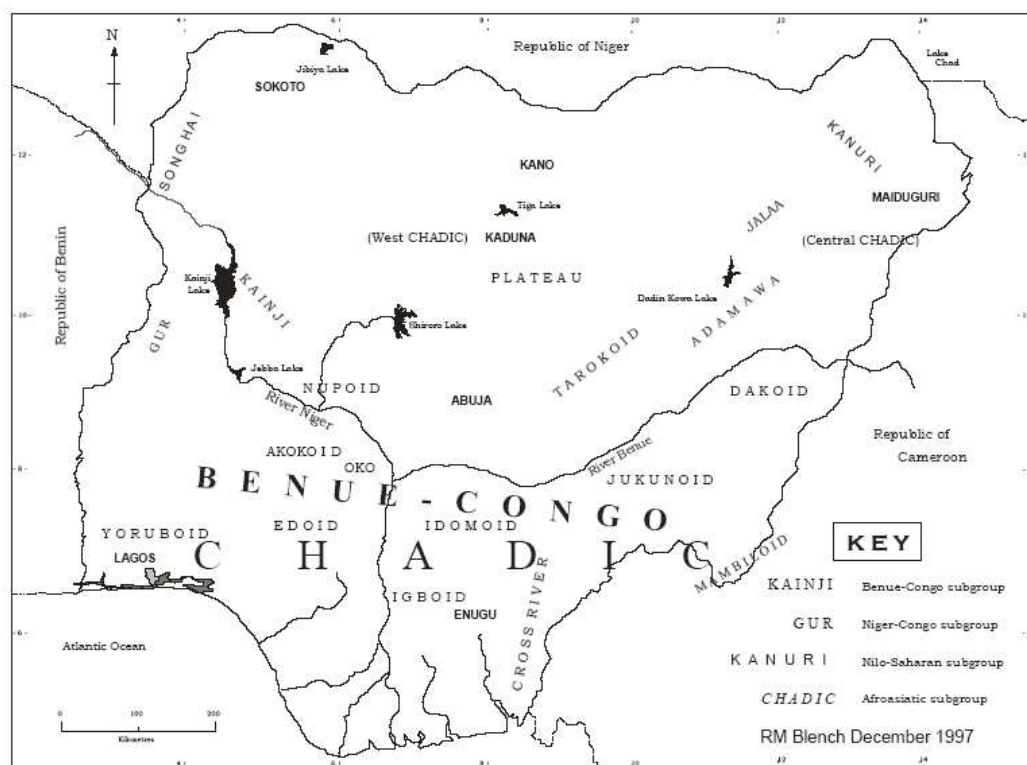


Figure 1: *Language Families in Nigeria*

Indigenous languages can be sub-divided into major and minor languages with respect to the number of speakers. In this regard, Hausa (the dominant language in the north), Yoruba (dominant in south-western area) and Igbo (dominant in the south-eastern region of the country) are the major or decamillionaire languages while other languages are in the minority. Nigerian Pidgin is the only hybrid language and qualifies for a pseudo-lingua franca. It has more speakers as it is the priority language of communication among educated and non-educated Nigerians of different ethnic background across the federation. Deuber (2005:51)



has rightly noted that “The great asset of NigP is that it is the most neutral language in Nigeria: it has neither the elitist connotations of English nor the ethnic connotations of the indigenous languages”. Pidgin is gradually creolizing as there are children in the Niger Delta region who acquire it as their mother tongue. Foreign languages refer to languages not official or indigenous to Nigerians but acquired or learnt for religious or educative purposes. For instance, Owens (2005) reports the domestication of Standard Arabic in northern Nigeria by a minority of Nigerian Arabs but in other parts of Nigeria, Standard Arabic is the recognised language for Islamic education among the Muslim populace.

In terms of codification and standardisation, indigenous languages in Nigeria can be classified into three groups: the developed, less-developed and under-developed. Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba constitute the orthographically developed languages; the less-developed class includes Edo, Efik, Fulfude, Kanuri, Ibibio, Igala, Ijo, Nupe, Tiv and Urhobo, to mention a few; while the under-developed ones comprise the vast majority that are not yet orthographically codified or are in the process being documented.

English and French are Nigeria’s two official languages (French became the second official language in 1998 by decree under the Abacha military regime). It was reported in one Nigerian daily *The Punch* on February 1, 2006 that the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) got the approval of the Nigerian Council on Education to develop a new curriculum which takes effect from September 2006 for pupils from the fourth grade of primary education to the Junior Secondary School 3 students to take French as a compulsory subject. With this educational policy in place, it is no longer doubtful that French is Nigeria’s second official language. It is worthy of note that the Nigerian educational system strongly promotes ‘institutionalized’ multilingualism. The Nigerian *National Policy on Education* (NPE) (1977, revised 1981) encourages the use of indigenous languages and English for

educational purposes. Section 3:15(4) of NPE states that the language of instruction in the primary school should initially be the child's mother tongue or the major language of the immediate community. Before the incorporation of French into the teaching curriculum in September 2006, English has been the language of instruction from mid-primary school to university education. This educational role of English accounts for the ever increasing number of its users in Nigeria (Akere, 1990:123). As a result, graduates from Nigerian tertiary institutions would have received instruction in English and would have used English as a means of regular communication for, at least, 15 years.

In postcolonial Nigeria bi/multilingualism is encouraged at every stratum of society. A very good example of this policy in practice till date is the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) scheme. Every Nigerian below age 30, on graduation from the university or polytechnic, is expected to participate in an obligatory 12-month paramilitary service to the nation ideally in a state of the federation different from their place of origin or state of university / polytechnic education. The goal is to promote inter-ethnic exchanges of cultures and languages. The government makes financial provisions for the main local language of the community to be taught to the serving fresh graduates. It is believed that if the local language is learnt, it would be easier for these servicemen and -women to be culturally integrated and assimilated. In turn, their productivity to their host community would be enhanced.

Essentially, the multilingual nature of Nigeria facilitates the acquisition of more than one language in the country. Educated Nigerians are bilingual because apart from the acquisition of their mother-tongue, they learn the language of wider communication in their vicinity or at least some form of Pidgin for inter-ethnic communication. And as stated above, the educational policy encourages 'institutionalized' multilingualism. Thus, switching of codes is inevitable because language functions seem very much to depend on context.

However, the linguistic situation in Nigeria necessitates simultaneous multilingualism. As explained by Agbali (2005:302),

[s]imultaneous multilingualism denotes a process whereby speakers competently communicate concurrently in different languages, with the ability to functionally code-switch easily from one language to another, especially within plural and multicultural social contexts through engaging and drawing from a variety of linguistic repertoires.

This is typically reflected in the linguistic habits of children born in urban areas and cosmopolitan cities of Nigeria and those who are products of intercultural marriages. In such situations it becomes difficult to specify which of the languages the child has been exposed to from infancy is classified as L1, L2 etc. Take the case of an Igbo-speaking Nigerian man from Asaba who is married to an Edo woman and gives birth to children who are raised in Lagos (a predominantly Yoruba as L1 community). Depending on the educational and social status of the parents, the children could be raised competently proficient in English, Edo, Igbo, Yoruba and Nigerian Pidgin. This is a familiar scenario in cities like Abuja, Kano, Lagos and Port Harcourt.

It should be mentioned that precolonial communities and kingdoms in Nigeria were predominantly monolingual entities (cf. Omoniyi 1999:373) and there would have appeared to have been no motivation for changing languages. However, with the increase of inter-ethnic business activities and interactions, a trade-induced language contact scenario emerged which resulted in the earliest form of code switching pattern in traditional Nigerian societies: indigenous-to-indigenous language switching and mixing. Going by this account, code switching in Nigeria pre-dates colonialism. It was not merely a conversational strategy. Then, when people changed languages in the course of verbal interactions, something else was being communicated: mutual respect, accommodation and tolerance. Iroh (2005) affirms this stance as follows:

The ability to adjust to different languages generates tolerance and

hospitality among the people. We do know from history that in the precolonial times, the Hausa merchant who traded his wares successfully across parts of Western and Central Sudan, the Akwa-Igbo Smith found as far North as Igala and Idoma land and as far South as Efik and Ijo land and the Yoruba trader who travelled between Western Nigeria and the Republic of Benin (Dahomey) could all switch from one language to another with comparative ease.

Interacting with one another in the other's language(s) was one way friendly business partnership was established among these precolonial traders. It required efforts to string together words or expressions in the other party's language and it signalled that there was mutual interest on both sides. This gesture of goodwill and genuine interest in the language cum culture of the other was always reciprocated by long-term traders. It is natural to expect hybridized linguistic systems and mixed cultures resulting from such interactions. Oral accounts suggest a favourable disposition to this earliest pattern of switching. Since there are no currently known documented examples of this pattern of code switching to this author, it is plausible to use the principle of historical inferencing to deduce that precolonial and colonial era indigenous-to-indigenous language switching and mixing have common features: juxtaposition of stretch of utterances from the different languages and indiscriminate insertion of lexical items from the languages in contact.

### **1.6.2 ENGLISH AND INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES**

Language is a vehicle for the transmission of cultural heritage and societal values from one generation to another. For western educated Nigerians, English is the default language for communicating ideological orientation and cultural ideals across ethnic and tribal groups, and beyond national boundaries. The world renown author and Nigerian novelist, Chinua Achebe (1975:22), summarises the communicative and vehicular roles of English in post-colonial Nigeria: “I feel the English language will be able to carry the weight of my African experience. But it will have to be a new English, still in communion with its ancestral home but

altered to suit its new African surroundings.”

Awonusi (1993 [republished in 2004]) chronicles the historical developments of English in Nigeria into three cycles. Note how Awonusi (1993:9) summarises the features of Nigeria's earliest contact (1400-1842) with Europeans linguistically (from Portuguese, Pidgin down to English):

- (a) the former use of Portuguese on Nigerian soil;
- (b) the evolution of Pidgin-Portuguese or 'Negro Portuguese' now extinct;
- (c) the emergence of the use of English – with some imperfections;
- (d) the emergence of an English-based Pidgin;
- (e) the use of English that had mainly an instrumental function as the language of trade;
- (f) the gradual anglicisation or acculturation of Nigerians, especially in the Calabar region;
- (g) the pioneering efforts of literary writings in English by people of African (specifically Nigerian) origin;
- (h) the development of an assimilationist attitude towards the English language;
- (i) the learning of English through an informal system as only a few schools (in the Calabar region) were in existence;
- (j) the use of an accent of English that is directionally British and near-native in articulation;
- (k) the emergence of bilingualism and consequently, language or code mixing.

This historical relationship has had tremendous impacts on linguistic systems in Nigeria till date. The incursion of English into the Nigerian linguistic space and its rise to the primary language of social interaction and integration among the Nigerian elite is one of the most prominent evidence of this union. On the other

hand, the evolution of Nigerian Pidgin has added a rich and simplified common variety to the numerous linguistic resources in the country. Then English-based educational policies and practices brought to the fore a habitual linguistic and communicative strategy among bi/multilingual Nigerians which is code switching. As long as linguistic tolerance is practised in Nigeria, code switching will continue to be an area of scholarly investigation.

### **1.7 IMPLICATIONS OF THE FOREGOING FOR RESEARCHING NIGERIAN INTERNET AND SMS DISCOURSE**

1. Being the most linguistically diversified African country in conjunction with the fact that Nigerians are embracing social media and mobile technologies at a phenomenal rate, technology-savvy Nigerians are generating more linguistic data, which opens up a window of research opportunities for language scholars as language is at the centre of communication via Internet and mobile technologies. Indeed, these technologies provide useful data for empirical investigation and are a goldmine of resources for diachronic and synchronic linguistics.
2. Following from the above, the diversity of languages and cultures in Nigeria will surely be reflected in the way Nigerians compose and transmit their messages via computers and mobile technologies. Thus, researching Nigerian CMC is worthwhile because of the medium's domestication and nativization of the English language, infusing it with sociocultural flavour.
3. With more users of English and CMC technologies on the African continent situated in Nigeria, the informality of Internet discourse will be accommodating to Nigerian linguistic eclecticism, language contact and

switching which are discernible features of 'vernacular dialogue' (Hauser, 1998) and 'Internet multilingualism' (Danet & Herring, 2007) in 'unregulated spaces' (Sebba, 2009b). This is hinged on the persuasion that globally available technologies can provide the impulse for a locally enacted symbolic creativity (Androutsopoulos & Scholz, 2002). Moreover, the linguistic pluralism of Nigerian online discourse is a contribution to the expanding 'virtual linguistic landscape' (Ivkovic & Lotherington, 2009; Landry & Bourhis, 1997).

4. Therefore, the underlying sociocultural manifestations of Nigerianisms in digital discourse are instantiations of the transnational transcultural flow and fusion of ideologies (Omoniyi, 2006; Pennycook, 2007) in world Englishes, whereby language responds to global trends.
5. Language use online generates the space of possibility for action in human society. In this vein, a linguistic investigation of textual Nigerian CMC can reveal the patterns of language use as social action especially for civil liberty activism and for bottom-up discursive negotiation of political empowerment versus top-down politicking.

By way of summary, Abati and Akunyili's stance versus that of the youth is a reinvention of two conflicting tendencies in linguistic systems observed by Leopold (1930:102) when he asserts that "Linguistic development follows not one tendency, but two opposing ones: towards distinctness and towards economy. Either of these poles prevails, but both are present and alternately preponderant". The institutional emphasis on using the official typography for the country is on the distinctness pole whereas the alternatives being used by Nigerian youth tilt towards economy. Similarly, Tauli (1958:50) would later propose that innovations in language use is driven by five forces: "(1) tendency towards clarity, (2) tendency towards ease or economy of effort, (3) emotional impulses,

(4) aesthetic tendencies, (5) social impulses”. All these factors come into play in the Nigerian typographic identity work. Indeed, typographic choices have social meanings because they can be used to communicate sociocultural affiliation and identity (Androutsopoulos, 2004) as well as to project ideological dispositions.



## CHAPTER 2

### THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORKS

... as CMC technology continues to evolve at a rapid pace, new and up-to-the-minute research will be needed to document its use. ... For *as long as computer-mediated communication involves language in any form*, there will be a need for computer-mediated discourse analysis.  
– (Herring, 2001; italics added)

I have felt comparable frustration in attempting to characterize *a phenomenon in flux*. This time the challenge is not words but the technologies and the systems we build upon them for communicating with one another. Those technologies include personal computers and mobile phones, and the systems have such names as email, instant messaging (IM), Facebook, and blogs.  
– (Baron, 2008; italics added)

This chapter has two main divisions. The first division is a general review of the state of the art of CMC including CMC research in the German literature as well as Nigerian CMC activities from 1990 to 2010, with theoretical and analytical frameworks for doing online research; and the second part dwells on the data composition.

#### 2.1 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Since its coinage by Hiltz & Turoff (1978), the term computer-mediated communication (CMC) has been adapted and broadly conceptualised as *interactive communication by / among human beings via networked computers and mobile devices*. CMC involves human-to-human transmission and exchange of digital information in textual, audio, visual or video formats via the Internet and mobile technologies. Whatever the format, language is the instrument of facilitating the communication.

From the several definitions of CMC<sup>5</sup> that have been offered in the literature, two in particular are of interest to this study because of their emphasis on the textual

---

<sup>5</sup> Elsewhere it is viewed as technology-based oral discourse (Rumf, 2003); attenuated speech, attenuated writing (Danet 2001), to mention a few.

aspect of digital discourse and data, and as is customary, a researcher's focus of enquiry influences the definition(s) of their subject matter and the adaptation of existing ones. Whereas Walther (1992:52) defines CMC as “synchronous or asynchronous electronic mail and computer conferencing, by which senders encode in text messages that are relayed from senders' computers to receivers”, Herring (2007) extends the concept to include mobile telephony by stating that CMC is “predominantly text-based human-human interaction mediated by networked computers or mobile telephony”. With Baron's (1984) article on “Computer mediated communication as a force in language change”, Murray's (1985) study on the computer terminal as medium of communication at IBM, Severinson Eklundh's (1986) examination of the dialogue processes in the Swedish COM system, and eventually Ferrara, Brunner & Whittemore's (1991) publication on “Interactive written discourse as an emergent genre”, linguists began applying linguistic and discourse analysis frameworks to CMC research which led to what Androutsopoulos (2006) calls the “first wave” of language-focused CMC.

Although the scope of the present study is restricted to textual CMC due to time constraints and limited resources, research on non-textual CMC is a thriving sub-domain in its own right. Examples include Watt, Walther & Nowak's (2002) report on asynchronous videoconferencing prototype; Grandhi et. al's (2003) examination of instant messaging(IM)-integrated IP-Telephony calling practices; Ferran & Watts's (2008) heuristic model of videoconferencing; Duman & Locher's (2008) study on the YouTube campaign conversations of Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama in the US 2008 electoral cycle; Harley & Fitzpatrick's (2009) multimodal interactional analysis of YouTube / video blogging (vlogging) in an intergenerational communication and context; Cramer's (2010) use of YouTube data from the 2008 World Economic Forum to analyze how pronouns are employed to index Europeaness; and Jenks & Firth's (in press / 2011) analysis of interactional dynamics in synchronous Voice-over-Internet Protocol (VoIP). In

April 2009, a conference was held at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst on “YouTube and the US 2008 Election Cycle” which resulted in a special issue of the *Journal of Information Technology and Politics* (2010).

Exploring discourse specific aspects of CMC has led to the specification of the disciplinary term 'computer-mediated discourse' (CMD) by Herring (2001), otherwise referred to as technologically-mediated discourse (TMD) by Thurlow (2003), electronically-mediated communication (EMC) by Baron (2008), or simply as electronic discourse (ED) by Davis & Brewer (1997). While CMC will be used as an umbrella term in this study, CMD, ED, EMC and TMD shall be regarded as broadly interchangeable terms.

Historically, the emergence of CMC is as much the story of the Internet. In the 1960s and early 1970s, the US Department of Defense with several research universities linked computers through the Defense Advanced Research Program Agency (DARPA) and the Advanced Research Project Agency network (ARPANET) resulting in a networking of remote computers for communication and research (Herring, 1996, 2002; Hiltz & Turoff, 1978; Jones, 1995; Murray, 2000; Steinfield, 1986). The timeline of these earliest developments are shown in Figure 2.

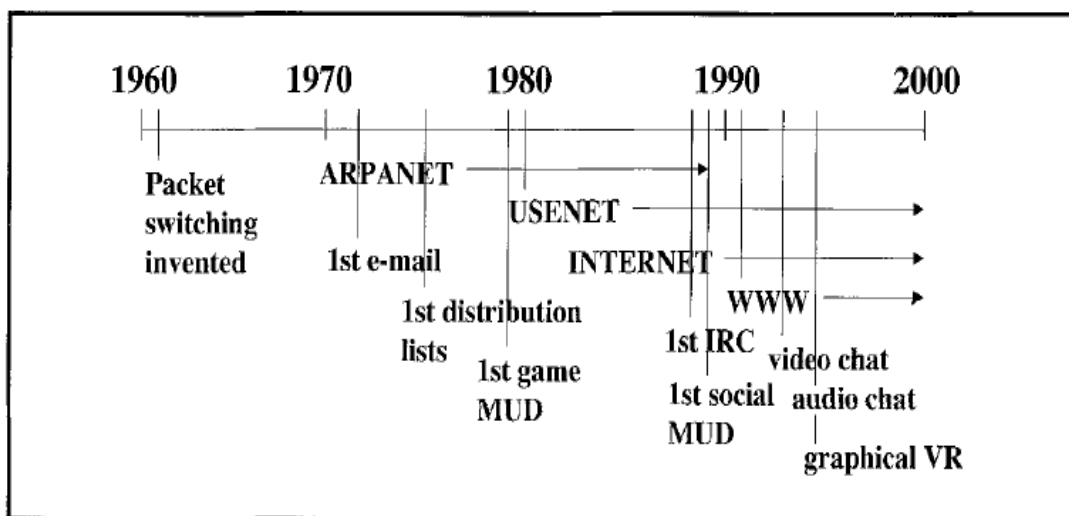


Figure 2: *The co-evolution of CMC and the Internet* (Herring, 2002:114)

As expressed by Baron (1998, 2005), the first ever written email was sent in 1971, listservs prototype emerged in the mid 1970s, the Usenet newsgroups were developed around 1979/1980, and Internet Relay Chat appeared in 1988. Similarly, mobile phone texting was birthed when the first SMS was sent from a personal computer to a mobile phone on the D2-Vodafone Network in 1992, and in 1994 SMSes were presented at the CEBIT fair in Hannover, Germany (Bergs, 2009).

As for the Internet, Websites without the provisions for user-oriented content creation came to be known as Web 1.0 (or first generation Web) whereas with the advent of blogging (Blood, 2000, 2002) and social networking sites (boyd & Ellison, 2007), a functional distinction is now made by the use of the term Web 2.0 (or the so-called second generation Web). According to O'Reilly (2007), the term 'Web 2.0' was officially coined in 2004 by Dale Dougherty, a vice-president of O'Reilly Media Inc. Features of the transformation of the Web from 1.0 to 2.0 are given below by O'Reilly (2007:18):

<b>Web 1.0</b>		<b>Web 2.0</b>
DoubleClick	→	Google AdSense
Ofoto	→	Flickr
Akamai	→	BitTorrent
mp3.com	→	Napster
Britannica Online	→	Wikipedia
personal websites	→	blogging
evite	→	upcoming.org and EVDB
domain name speculation	→	search engine optimization
page views	→	cost per click
screen scraping	→	web services
publishing	→	participation
content management systems	→	wikis
directories (taxonomy)	→	tagging ("folksonomy")
stickiness	→	syndication

For Warschauer & Grimes (2007), the key distinction between Web 1.0 and Web

2.0 lies in their *publishing* and *participation* potentials, whereas for Wesch (2007) it is a transformation from the *linking of information* to the *linking of people*. Thus, the remarkable features of Web 2.0 are: (i) ease of individual production and user generated content, (ii) harnessing the power of the crowd, (iii) availability and ubiquity of data in large scale, (iv) architecture of participation, (v) enhanced networking, and (vi) an astonishing openness (Anderson, 2007; O'Reilly, 2007).

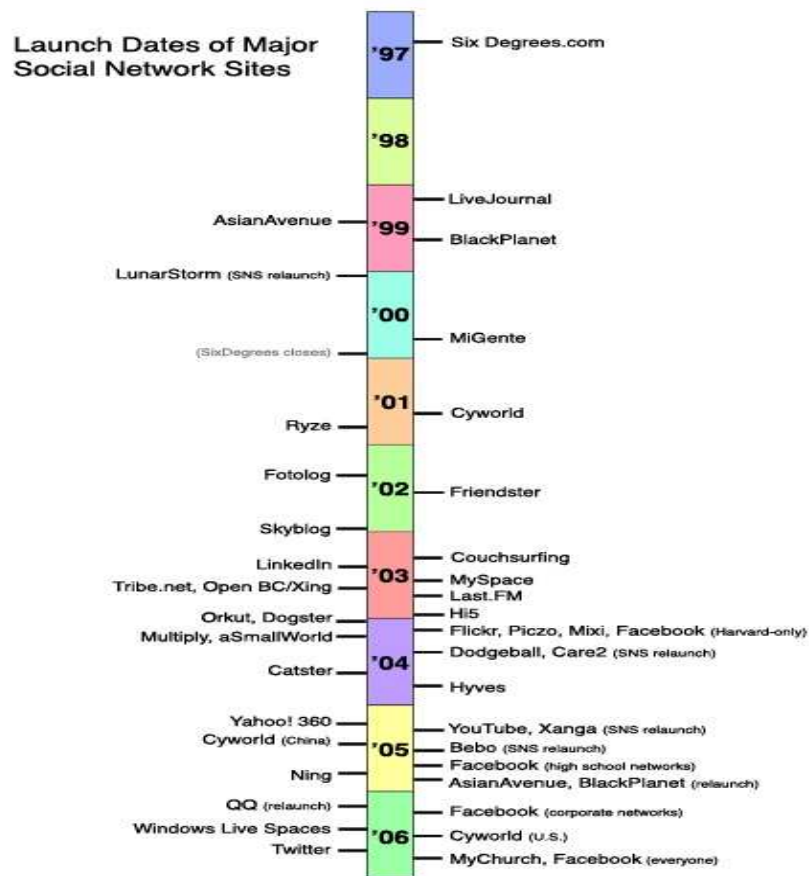


Figure 3: Chronological launch dates of major Social Networking Sites (boyd & Ellison, 2007)

### 2.1.1 COMPUTER-MEDIATED DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

In the CMC literature two analytical frameworks stand out: Herring's (2001, 2004, 2007) methodological and typological classification of CMD, and Koch & Oesterreicher's (1985, 1994, 2007) communicative continuum model. We opine

that in order to adequately explore plurilingual data, theoretical frameworks for investigating linguistic phenomena in CMC should be conceptually multidimensional, and strive to blend multimodality with multilingualism.

As a disciplinary domain, the term “computer-mediated discourse analysis” (CMDA) was coined in 1995 (Herring, 2001). In addition to the afore-mentioned 'first wave' language-focused CMC, other pioneering CMDA paradigms consist of Maynor (1994), the first publication of *The Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* (1995), Jones's (1995) edited volume on *Cybersociety*, Herring's (1996) edited volume, Collot & Belomore (1996), Paolillo (1996), Yates (1996), Davis & Bremer (1997), Baron (1998) and Cherny (1999), among others. More recent studies (or shall we say second wave of CMC) on Internet discourse in the 21st century include Androutsopoulos & Hinnenkamp (2001), Crystal (2001), Danet (2001), Herring (2001, 2004, 2007, 2010), Döring (2002), Hård af Segerstad (2002), Dürscheid (2003), Danet & Herring (2003, 2007), Baron (2003, 2008), Marccoccia (2004), Androutsopoulos & Ziegler (2004), Androutsopoulos (2006, 2007, 2011), Sebba (2007b); Beißwenger (2008), Chiluya (2009, 2010), Dürscheid, Wagner & Brommer (2010), and Taiwo (2010a, 2010b).

Linguistic analysis of mobile phone texting is cross-national<sup>6</sup>. For instance, it has been observed that Swedish texters use non-standard typography by spelling phonetically (Hård af Segerstad, 2002); in Norway, female teenagers employ more abbreviations and innovative spellings (Ling, 2005); German texters use slightly different reduction techniques (Androutsopoulos & Schmidt, 2002; Bergs, 2009; Beißwenger, 2007; Döring, 2002; Dürscheid, 2002; Dürscheid & Stark, 2011/in press); and Nigerian texters frequently use indigenous languages in their SMS discourse (Awonusi, 2004, 2010; Chiluya, 2008; Elvis, 2009; Ofulue, 2008; Taiwo, 2008).

---

<sup>6</sup> For a more comprehensive overview, see Thurlow & Poff, 2011.

The overview of CMDA presented here largely follows Herring's (2004) widely acknowledged elaborate description. CMDA frameworks employ methods and techniques adapted from language-focused disciplines to the analysis of naturally-occurring text-based language use mediated by the Internet, mobile devices and phones (Herring, 2004). The frameworks are further supplemented by a toolkit of discourse analysis methods adapted from spoken conversation and written text analysis (Herring, 2004, 2010). Therefore, any linguistically-anhored analysis of electronically-mediated data or the analysis of online behaviour that is grounded in empirical, textual observations is CMDA.

CMDA can be employed for the investigation of a range of language-oriented phenomena: from the smallest to the largest unit of linguistic analysis such as (a) structure, (b) meaning, (c) interaction, and (d) social behaviour (Herring, 2004). Structural phenomena involves the use of typography or orthography, spelling variations, graphological manipulations, neologisms and sentence structure (Androutsopoulos, 2004; Androutsopoulos & Ziegler, 2004; Annis, 2007; Beißwenger, 2007; Danet, 2001; Herring & Zelenkauskaitė, 2009; Spilioti, 2009). At the meaning level, the meaning of words and speech acts are examined; interactional issues include turn-taking, topic development and discursive identity emergent in interaction (Sebba, 2007b; Zitzen, 2004; Zitzen & Stein, 2004); and social issues include the linguistic exploration of playfulness, power, gender, conflict and group membership (Danet, 2001; Herring, 2004).

As an approach, the theoretical propositions of CMDA are those of linguistic discourse analysis and the methodological frameworks are both qualitative and quantitative language-focused content analysis. However, being a young field, CMDA can be regarded as a methodological approach in progress because of newly emerging electronic data that fall under its purview. This is to be the case because, usually, new linguistic data with medium-specific features may pose

analytical challenges to an existing theory of language use, and in some cases a refinement or re-application of theories may be necessary. In light of this fact, Androutsopoulos (2008, 2010) and Androutsopoulos & Beißwenger (2008) advocate the extension of CMD frameworks to include online ethnography. So, discourse-centred online ethnography (DCOE) supplements the systematic observation of selected CMC platforms with direct contacts with the key interactants.

### 2.1.2 HERRING'S FACETED CLASSIFICATION OF COMPUTER-MEDIATED DISCOURSE

Most CMC research is conducted with the assumption that CMD is constrained by two principal factors namely, *medium* (technological) and *situation* (social). Although the technological determinism fad is rejected, technological factors such as message protocols, servers and client, hardware and user interfaces influence computer-mediated language use. Similarly, social factors associated with the situation or context of communication such as information about participants, their relationships to one another, the purpose of communication, discourse topic, and the kind of language used play crucial roles in CMC. Invoking Ranganathan (1933) and Hymes (1974), faceted classification is an approach for categorizing concepts of the same inherent type and with similar taxonomic features.

Table 2: The medium factors of Herring's classification scheme (Herring, 2007)

M1	Synchronicity
M2	Message transmission (1-way vs. 2-way)
M3	Persistence of script
M4	Size of message buffer
M5	Channels of communication
M6	Anonymous messaging
M7	Private messaging
M8	Filtering



M9	Quoting
M10	Message format

One advantage of this classification scheme is that it does not rely on pre-existing modes, and thus it can be applied to discourse mediated by emergent and experimental CMC systems. It is also intended as a faceted lens through which to view CMD data in order to facilitate linguistic analysis in the discourse analysis, conversation analysis, pragmatics, and sociolinguistics traditions. Its multidimensional theoretic approach is appealing and suitable for the present study because our thematic concerns draw on various aspects of discourse analysis, sociolinguistics and pragmatics.

Table 3: The social factors of Herring's classification scheme (Herring, 2007)

S1	Participation structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One-to-one, one-to-many, many-to-many</li> <li>• Public/private</li> <li>• Degree of anonymity/pseudonymity</li> <li>• Group size; number of active participants</li> <li>• Amount, rate, and balance of participation</li> </ul>
S2	Participant characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proficiency: with language/computers/CMC</li> <li>• Experience: with addressee/group/topic</li> <li>• Role/status: in “real life”; of online personae</li> <li>• Pre-existing sociocultural knowledge and interactional norms</li> <li>• Attitudes, beliefs, ideologies, and motivations</li> </ul>
S3	Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Of group, e.g., professional, social, fantasy/roleplaying, aesthetic, experimental</li> <li>• Goal of interaction, e.g., get information, negotiate consensus, develop professional/social relationships, impress/entertain others, have fun</li> </ul>
S4	Topic or Theme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Of group, e.g., politics, linguistics, feminism, soap operas, sex, science fiction, South Asian culture, medieval times, pub</li> <li>• Of exchanges, e.g., the war in Iraq, pro-drop languages, the project budget, gay sex, vacation plans, personal information about participants, meta-discourse about CMC</li> </ul>
S5	Tone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Serious/playful</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formal/casual</li> <li>• Contentious/friendly</li> <li>• Cooperative/sarcastic, etc.</li> </ul>
S6	Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• E.g., debate, job announcement, information exchange, phatic exchange, problem solving, exchange of insults, joking exchange, game, theatrical performance, flirtation, virtual sex</li> </ul>
S7	Norms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Of organization</li> <li>• Of social appropriateness</li> <li>• Of language</li> </ul>
S8	Code	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Language, language variety</li> <li>• Font/writing system</li> </ul>

Two recent doctorate level studies in Germany (Meinl, 2010; Puschmann, 2010) also found the scheme to be useful for CMDA and adopted it as their main analytic framework. The present study builds on this classification.

### **2.1.3 KOCH & OESTERREICHER'S MODEL IN GERMAN CMC STUDIES**

According to Schlobinski (2001), by the dawn of the 21st century, “more extensive and more detailed studies of language and communication in the Internet have been carried out in the German-language domain than in the Anglophone domain”, and Koch & Oesterreicher's (1985, 1994) model has been productively applied too. The model has proven to be quite influential in the German CMC research community as several studies (e.g. Beißwenger, 2000, 2002; Dürschie, 1999, 2003, 2006; Günther & Wyss, 1996; Kallmeyer, 2000; Runkehl, Schlobinski, & Siever, 1998; Schlobinski, 2001; Stein, 2005; Storrer, 2001; Wehner, 1997; Weingarten, 1997; Zitzen, 2004; Zitzen & Stein, 2004) have either appealed to, adapted or modified the model for explicating the challenges of classifying and researching novel textual CMC practices.

Koch & Oesterreicher's (1985, 1994) analytic model offers a theoretic, explanatory and graphic representation of a communication continuum in terms of orality and literacy, thereby making it possible to analyze CMC data without

being boxed into the traditional speech-writing prism. Rather, it contextualizes and shapes how one addresses relevant on-going research questions such as these: (1) What happens to the structure of a spoken language when it becomes a written artifact? (Havelock, 1986:24); (2) What happens to the patterns of usage when writing loses its artifactual nature and becomes digital? (Danet, 2001:13); (3) What happens to patterns of inscribed communication when it loses its artifactual nature and becomes digital and multimedia? (Danet, 2001:13).

Koch & Oesterreicher's (1985, 1994, 2007) characterize all forms of language use by a continuum represented along two dimensions of the “language of proximity” (*Sprache der Nähe*) and “language of distance” (*Sprache der Distanz*) independent of medium with a fundamental medial-conceptual distinction for discourse typology.

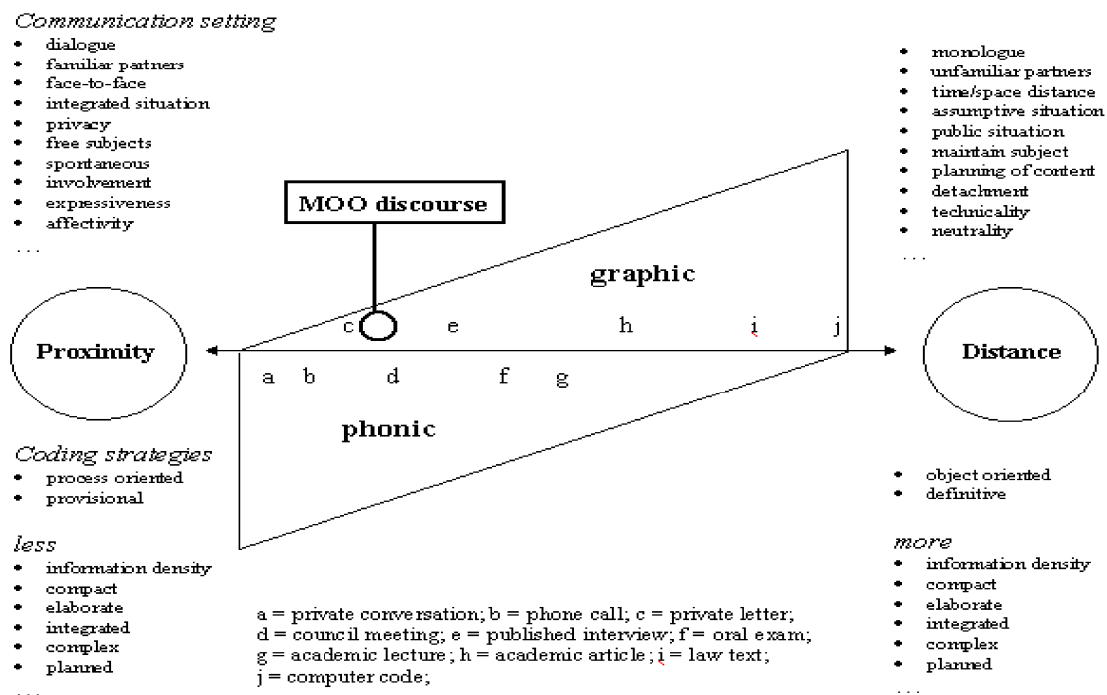


Figure 4: Distribution of different communication types, based on the two dimensional model by Koch & Oesterreicher (From Weininger & Shield, 2001).

Echoing Weininger & Shield (2001) verbatim, towards the pole of distance, communication tends to occur more frequently in the graphic channel, while the language of proximity appears to have a natural affinity with the phonic channel. However, MOO-discourse, for example occurs in a graphic channel, and yet may lie closer to the pole of proximity (i.e. 'conceptual orality') than many of the examples of phonic communication.

According to Koch & Oesterreicher (1994: 587),

Der wissenschaftliche Vortrag ist also beispielsweise trotz seiner Realisierung im phonischen Medium konzeptionell 'schriftlich', während der Privatbrief trotz seiner Realisierung im graphischen Medium konzeptioneller 'Mündlichkeit' nähersteht. Die prinzipielle Unabhängigkeit von Medium und Konzeption steht nicht im Widerspruch dazu, daß einerseits zwischen dem phonischen Medium und konzeptionell mündlichen Äußerungsformen, andererseits zwischen dem graphischen Medium und konzeptionell schriftlichen Äußerungsformen eine ausgeprägte Affinität besteht. ... Ein familiäres Gespräch verbleibt eben normalerweise im phonischen Medium, ein Gesprächstext wird in aller Regel graphisch gespeichert.

The model is continually being refined. For instance, Dürscheid (1999, 2003), Zitzen (2004), and Koch & Oesterreicher's (2007) propose different modifications.

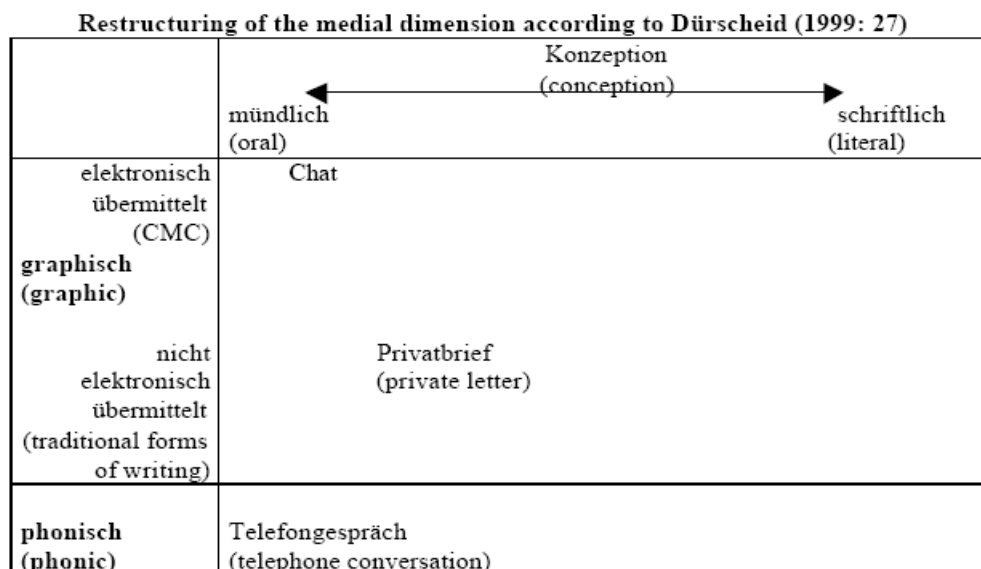


Figure 5: Restructuring of the medial dimension following Dürscheid (1999)

The model has relevance for digital discourse because textual CMC, on the basis of digital-graphic signs, combines semiotic and communicative operations (Holly 2000: 90). In the words of (Storrer 2001: 463),

Digitale Schrift ist eine von einem Trägermedium abgelöste Schrift; sie kann in Sekundenschnelle über weite Entfernungen transportiert und kostengünstig archiviert werden. Deshalb kann sie nun - zusätzlich bzw. parallel zu ihren "traditionellen" Funktionen bei der Verdauerung von Wissen - im räumlichen Distanzbereich Funktionen übernehmen, die bislang dem mündlichen Medium vorbehalten waren.

In Zitzen (2004), the concept of digitality is suggested to cater for electronic data in the extended model put forth by Dürscheid (1999).

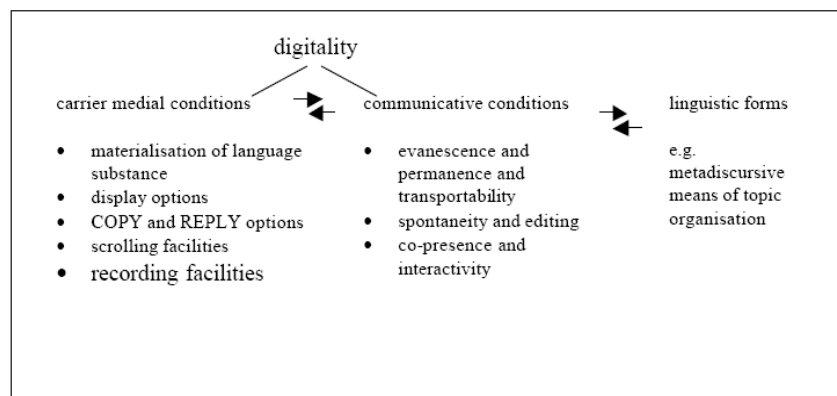


Figure 6: Zitzen's (2004) proposed nomenclature

**Addition of the medial dimension "digigraphic" (Zitzen, 2004:57)**

carrier medial conditions	communicative conditions	conceptionally ← spoken digisproken? digiwritten? written →
<b>digigraphic</b>	blending of feature dimension 1-3	chat private email
<b>graphic</b>	permanence/ transportability, editing, desituated, no turn-taking in the behavioural sense	Privatbrief (private letter)
<b>phonic</b>	evanescence spontaneity temporal copresence turn-taking in the behavioural sense	Telefongespräch (telephone conversation)

Figure 7: Zitzen's (2004) incorporated nomenclature

Dürscheid (2003) using Ehlich's (1981) "Zerhehnung der Sprechsituation" further advocates the following extensions as seen in Figures 8 and 9 respectively.

gemeinsamer Kommunikationsraum <b>synchrone Kommunikation</b>	gemeinsamer Kommunikationsraum <b>quasi-synchrone Kommunikation</b>	kein gemeinsamer Kommunikationsraum <b>asynchrone Kommunikation</b>
Telefonat	Chat/ Instant Messaging	Fax/ E-Mail/ SMS/ Nachricht auf Anrufbeantworter
- ← ————— → + ‚Zerdehnung der Sprechsituation‘ (Ehlich 1981)		

Figure 8: Dürscheid's (2003) proposed synchronous, quasi-synchronous and asynchronous communication

This is both intuitively and practically a plausible proposal because the basic assumption in CMD is that synchronicity versus asynchronicity in textual CMC situationally differs from spoken and face-to-face interactions, and synchronicity

versus asynchronicity in textual CMC is along a continuum (Herring, 2007).

	konzeptionell mündlich	konzeptionell schriftlich
	←	→
medial mündlich	synchron	D <sub>1</sub> D <sub>2</sub> D <sub>3</sub> D <sub>4</sub> [...] D <sub>x</sub>
	asynchron	T <sub>1</sub> T <sub>2</sub> T <sub>3</sub> T <sub>4</sub> [...] T <sub>x</sub>
medial schriftlich	quasi-synchron	D <sub>1</sub> D <sub>2</sub> D <sub>3</sub> D <sub>4</sub> [...] D <sub>x</sub>
	asynchron	T <sub>1</sub> T <sub>2</sub> T <sub>3</sub> T <sub>4</sub> [...] T <sub>x</sub>

Figure 9: Dürscheid's proposed extension

Perhaps responding to the various suggestions for an updated modification, Koch & Oesterreicher's (2007:346) revise the model with the following explanations:

The fundamental distinction between the *medial* problem of 'phonic' vs. 'graphic' realisation of discourses, on the one hand, and the *conceptual* problem of their 'spoken = informal' vs. 'written = formal' character (denominated 'communicative immediacy' vs. 'distance' in the following) not only constitutes a sound theoretical basis for investigation into orality and literacy, but also leads to a better understanding of a wide range of synchronic and diachronic phenomena concerning language. The medial-conceptual distinction accounts, for example, for important problems on the level of discourse typology, comprising, for instance, 'elaborated' types of primary orality, communicative dynamics in medieval societies, modern types of electronic communication (e-mail, SMS message, chat), etc. (italics in original)

Going by the number of studies in the German literature embracing the model for the sake of its analytic and illustrative potentials, there is the need for its continual refinement for it to be able to cope with new electronic and multimedia data as they emerge. After all, no current model can claim to fully explain and account for an evolving electronic phenomenon “in a flux” (Baron, 2008). The tenets of this model are indeed useful from a typological point of view but we see no compelling need for its adoption in this study.

Our stance is that, in terms of modality, textual CMC has the intrinsic form of writing but it also simulates some oral features of spoken language. It is inherently a virtual, visible and visual *representation* of human language with the

attendant discursive nuances of face-to-face interactions. We hold the view that all forms of writing systems are attempts to simulate human language or communication patterns by the innovative or “conventional use of visible symbols for the recording or transmission of ideas, or of ideas and sounds ... or of sounds unaccompanied by ideas” (Edgerton, 1941: 149). Observations of various kinds of writing patterns in CMC data reveal that online and SMS discourse can be motivated or constrained by the following factors:

- (a) Technology-enhanced freedom of expressions;
- (b) Informality and playful expressivity (Danet, 1995 & 2001);
- (c) Phaticity (language use for social rituals & simulation of emotions & attitudinal dispositions);
- (d) Language economy;
- (e) Linguistic creativity;
- (f) (Anticipated) reciprocity or interactivity; and
- (g) Interconnectivity.

Therefore, language and communication patterns in text-based CMC is all about the electronic simulation of language representation. Playfulness and phaticity will then form a continuum in the electronic simulation of human language and the attendant nuances of communication in general with emotional and attitudinal dispositions.

With the emergence of (near) real-time social micro-blogging applications like Twitter, the previously established dichotomy between synchronous versus asynchronous communication is becoming blurred<sup>7</sup>. Apart from the issue of

---

<sup>7</sup> Dynamic virtual practices are critically challenging and altering previously held assumptions about CMD and its classifications. For instance, a recent feature of live Personal IM in mobile telephony makes IM no longer a practice restricted to the wired Internet access domain thereby enhancing more synchronous textual interactions on mobile phones. According to GSMA “The Personal Instant Messaging (Personal IM) initiative was designed to enable mobile users worldwide to exchange instant messages across networks. With Personal IM, instant messaging is no longer restricted to the fixed Internet world. It offers the opportunity to connect a mobile community in excess of 3 billion across all networks and geographic boundaries. It is not limited to specific Internet communities and



timing mentioned above, events can also trivialize the distinction partly because the level of importance attached to events generates enthusiasm and increases the semi-synchronicity of textual participation among online interactants. For instance, this writer became aware of the existence of Twitter through a Nigerian TV website in mid 2008 and was able to follow campaigns and news about the US 2008 Presidential Election on <http://election.twitter.com>. As a newbie then to the micro-blogging application, this author spent hours daily monitoring the flow of information and interaction among twitterers. Our observation is that textual online interaction during special or live events – like sports activities, breaking news, protests, electoral campaigns or elections, State of the Union Address and news conferences by a popular president (e.g. Barack Obama) with a large number of 'followers' on Twitter – is semi-synchronous because interactants across the globe are simultaneously online and able to exchange messages and information in real-time.

In the same vein, textual exchanges in traditionally asynchronous social media like Facebook during significant live events such as the inauguration ceremony of the 44<sup>th</sup> President of the United States on 20 January 2009 and President Obama's strategic Cairo Speech on 4 June 2009 make typical asynchronous texts semi-synchronous. CNN.com/live collaborated with Facebook to cover the inauguration ceremony and provided the platform for the live streaming video of the event as Facebook users were able to connect and textually interact simultaneously. In the case of the latter speech targeted at audiences in predominantly Muslim countries to signal change in relations between the US and Muslims around the world, the US administration officials sent real-time excerpts to connected subscribers via Twitter, Facebook and SMS and participants were able to respond via SMS and with over 2000 comments on the

---

with 'Presence' functionality available through IM, users can see in real time the status of their contacts and know when and how they can get in touch with them”.

<http://gsmworld.com/our-work/programmes-and-initiatives/personal-instant-messaging/index.htm#nav-6>

Accessed on 15 July 2009

Facebook page (The *Associated Press* June 4, 2009). This also strengthens the argument that some CMC platforms are real-time avenues for deliberations on and discussions about real issues in the real world (cf. Crystal 2001: 171).

Similarly, mobile internet services made possible by wireless technologies appear to weaken the water-tight distinction between strictly computer-mediated and mobile phone aided text-based communication because of the present day “always online” culture (Baron, 2008; Patterson et. al., 2008:64) facilitated by mobile platforms such as mobile phones and personal digital assistants (PDAs). Again, using the micro-blogging social software – Twitter – as an example, it is possible for it to bridge textual interactions among several platforms. It is the case that tweets can be posted via Twitter.com, text messaging, instant messaging, or from third party clients; therefore, the ability to post from mobile phones makes Twitter a mobile application too (Honeycutt and Herring, 2009). For instance, the following data are presented to illustrate how Twitter bridges many platforms:

TWEET 001

This is an Ekitirr tweeter test from my mobile phone for the first time

[5:41 PM Apr 16th](#) from [txt](#)

TWEET 002

Just saw that the test from my mobile phone succeeded! I am now entering this tweet directly from the twitter website!

[5:43 PM Apr 16th](#) from [web](#)

TWEET 003

No soldiers to be deployed in Ekiti rerun, says Yar'Adua

[12:23 AM Apr 23rd](#) from [mobile web](#)

TWEET 007

That I don't agree with you right now doesn't mean you're wrong. I may not be wrong too, it may just be that many roads lead to that market!

4:30 AM Jun 4th from NaijaPulse

TWEETS 001 – 003 are from the same Twitter account but TWEET 007 is from a different user with a different account. 001 was sent from a mobile phone as text message hence the source signature “from txt”. 002 was sent from the Web as indicated by the tweeterer while 003 was sent from a mobile phone with mobile internet connection. The account user is a Nigerian who registered the account to monitor and report citizens' observations on gubernatorial re-run elections in some local government areas of Ekiti State in Nigeria held on 25 April 2009 and 5 May 2009. TWEET 007, on the other hand, shows how tweets can be sent or forwarded from a third party client to Twitter.com. This user is also a Nigerian and uses the client – NaijaPulse – which is a Nigerianised or customized version of Twitter that functions exactly like Twitter. It initiates interactive communication like Twitter and lets users say what they are doing, start or follow a discussion, share a link or news item, join or create groups. Like Twitter it poses the question “Nigeria, *Wetin Dey Happen?*” (a Pidgin interrogative: “Nigeria(ns), what's happening?”) thereby prompting responses from subscribers. It was launched in February 2009. As soon as the composer of TWEET 007 posts comments on NaijaPulse they are instantaneously forwarded to his main Twitter page. Hence the source signature of 007 as “from NaijaPulse”.

#### **2.1.4 NIGERIAN CMC STUDIES (1990 - 2010)**

In alignment with the global trend of CMC research (Androutsopoulos & Beißwenger, 2008; Herring, 2007; O'Reilly, 2007; Warschauer & Grimes, 2007)

and using data input method(s), modality, and genre-specific features (Andersen, 2008; Androutsopoulos, 2010; Crowston & Williams, 2000) as parameters, Nigerian textual CMC activities and studies in the years 1990-2010 are hereby grouped into three broad categories: (i) Web 1.0 communicative exchanges (e.g. Bastian, 1999; Blommaert & Omoniyi, 2006; Chiluiwa, 2009, 2010; Deuber & Hinrichs, 2007; Moran, 2000; Ofulue, 2010; Oluwole, 2009), (ii) mobile telephony and text messaging (e.g. Awonusi, 2004, 2010; Chiluiwa, 2008; Ekong & Ekong, 2010; Elvis, 2009; Obadare, 2006; Ofulue, 2008; Taiwo, 2008) and (iii) social media and multi-platform Web 2.0 discourse (e.g. Ifukor, 2008, 2009a, 2009b, 2010, in press/2011a, 2011b, submitted, under review; Oni & Osunbade, 2009; Taiwo, 2010a, 2010b). Moreover, this classification is in concert with the theoretical underpinnings of multimodality and multilingualism in new media as reflected in several papers in Sebba, Mahootian & Jonsson (2011).

CMC is still a novel research field in Nigeria but with great promises and possibilities for linguists and social scientists<sup>8</sup>. The first Nigerian virtual community came into existence in the early 1990s (Bastian, 1999; Moran, 2000) through the activities of netizens residing in the United States of America (USA). It specifically began in 1991 by means of forwarded emails on news items related to Nigeria culled from Reuters and AFP by one Noble “Baba” Ekajeh (Bastian, 1999). The circulation of these forwarded emails was restricted to a handful of selected friends and eventually metamorphosed into the premier listserv (email list), Naijanet. In this wise, “Baba” Ekajeh, Patrick Nta and ekundayo (Enuma Ogunyemi) in Massachusetts are called the pioneers of web-based Nigerian textual communication (Bastian, 1999; Moran, 2000). According to Bastian (1999), the various activities by diasporan Nigerians via email, listserv and the Usenet newsgroup became the pillars for the construction of a “virtual Nigeria”. The virtual space affords Nigerian netizens the opportunity to exchange pieces of

---

<sup>8</sup> Non-linguist Nigerians are beginning to explore the use and impact of mobile phones on socialization and social activities. For instance, Obadare (2006) illustrates the use of the mobile phone technology as a boycott tool by Nigerians in an incident that occurred on 19 September 2003.

news items about the social, political and economic affairs in Nigeria. There was a nationalistic bent in the manner in which these netizens discussed and deliberated on issues about the homeland. But typical of multicultural and multi-ethnic online communities when diversity is not properly managed, heated dialogues, debates and differences in opinions soon led to breakaways from the frontline listserv – Naijanet, and the formation of newer ones, mostly along ethnic affiliations such as Oduduwanet in 1992 (for Yoruba speakers) and Igbonet in 1994, for people of Igbo origin (Bastian, 1999; Moran, 2000).

Political and social incidents in Nigeria served as catalysts for the formation of other listservs, Usenet newsgroups (e.g. *soc.culture.nigeria*<sup>9</sup> created in 1995) and several online forums. Listservs are moderated email discussion lists that require contributors to subscribe to the lists as the messages are distributed through a listserver to all subscribers by default. The Usenet newsgroups (which represent the “Unix Users Network” developed in 1979 by graduate students at Duke University and the University of North Carolina) are topically and hierarchically organized for open readership, and except for a few, they are mostly unmoderated and so subscription is usually not required because newsgroups have no legal owners. Online discussion forums combine the features of listservs and newsgroups with a more elegant and user-friendly interface, and are managed by human administrators.

SMS text messaging as a subset of CMC is where there is a growing interest among a few Nigerian linguists. Awonusi (2004) is the pioneering study in this respect carried out in an insightful sociolinguistic tradition. Using a corpus of 88 texts he opines that there appears to be an informal lect of English within a written electronic setting among urban-based educated Nigerians. The main striking thing about the study is the awareness it creates about the need for

---

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.newsdemon.com/newsgroup-info/soc.culture.nigeria>

rigorous research in the area of informal text-based communication among Nigerians. However, although he briefly mentions text multilingualism, his data composition does not warrant elaborate discussion on it. Hence the need for this current study that is principally concerned with the dynamics of textual language alternation in CMC. Ofulue's (2008) sociolinguistic study of SMS texts in Yoruba does to an indigenous Nigerian language what Awonusi (2004) accomplished for English-based text messaging. Her laudable study demonstrates that an indigenous language is capable of being used for virtual informal interpersonal communication. She empirically shows that indigenous languages in a technological medium can be used for communicating private affairs, friendliness and for maintaining interpersonal relationships. The significance of the study from a sociocultural point of view is the predominance of data with inspirational texts and invocations (about 99%). Taiwo (2008) also lends credence to the increasing number of Nigerian SMS texts with inspirational and invocatory contents blended with creative sociocultural scripts.

Interestingly, Chiluya (2008) like Awonusi (2004) uses a corpus of 61 SMS texts to examine the occurrence of Nigerianisms in the English of textual communication among urban educated Nigerians. His findings reveal that 60% of the data fall under the category of personal text messages and inspirational invocations constitute 90% of them. He stresses that although the medium encourages informality, it does not pose any negative pedagogical challenge to English teaching and learning in Nigeria because the SMS interlocutors are already literate textizens. All these four SMS studies establish the fact that messages with inspirational and invocatory contents feature prominently in Nigerian SMS texts and they in fact constitute the highest proportions of the data (apart from Awonusi's).

Linked to our interest in typography in this study, the following are some of the

recurrent spelling patterns in Nigerian SMS texts:

1. Standard spelling eg. TXT 001: “Thanks bro, we are all doing well. God is helping us” (Received by this author on 15 November 2008 at 16:31 CET).
2. Phonetic representation – “No wahala, pls! Neva said I wont. Bt just dt, tins are a bit tight now. ... I'll try 2 meet up” emphasized words underlined (Received on 25 November 2008 at 14:21 CET) --- TXT 002
3. Alphanumeric and rebus abbreviation – “Tnks. Hope u re nt scared of height cos u r movin up! Hop u can dance cos u v 2 celebrate. Hop u re strng, cos u v got 2 carry exces blesns 4rm nw onward, hpp new yr” (Sent by a fellow Nigerian in Germany to the author on 1 January 2009 at 23:59 CET in response to the author's text message) --- TXT 003
4. Clippings e.g. *pls*, *Bt* in TXT 002 and *Tnks*, *strng*, *nw*, *hpp*, *yr* in TXT 003.
5. Ideograms and emoticons – e.g. TXT 004 below received on 2 June 2004 at 10:13 GMT+1 by a Nigerian in Lagos:

“+ ”). “+ . “+ . “+ . “+ “ ( “+ “.  
.+ BRIGHT DAY +’  
“ , + ‘ “ . ‘+ “ . ‘+ “+ .  
\* May Ur Day \* Be Bright Like Stars & May GOD Grant U Favor Always,  
+\*\*Amen\*\*+

Mobile and Web-based CMC will continue to be an attractive research endeavour in the Nigerian context and the present study provides fresh pragmatic analysis of Nigerian CMC data and proposes some analytical agenda for future Nigerian CMC.

### **2.1.5 SPELLING RESENTMENT AND REBELLION IN THE TYPOGRAPHIC REPRESENTATIONS OF NIGERIANNES**

In response to the first research question of this study on how and why typography has become an issue of national identity discourse in Nigeria, we argue that typographic choices have social meanings and reflect ideological

dispositions. These choices are also sites for institutional-cum-generational differences on the typographic representations of Nigerianness. The two major spelling choices under consideration for national identity construction are 'Nigeria' and 'Naija'. We shall contextualize this discourse by making reference to the opinions of two prominent Nigerians (Dr. Reuben Abati and Prof. Dora Akunyili) who are institutional figures and represent the older generation while the blog posts of two Nigerian bloggers (Banky W and Aribaba & The 40 Touts) represent the youth, as they have decided to speak for the younger generation with echoes from readers of the blogs as well as other online interactants.

As a proper noun, Miss Flora Shaw is credited with the coinage of the spelling 'Nigeria' which first appeared in the *Financial Times of London* on January 8, 1897 in an essay written by her as follows:

The name Nigeria applying to no other part of Africa may without offence to any neighbours be accepted as co-extensive with the territories over which the Royal Niger Company has extended British influence, and may serve to differentiate them equally from the colonies of Lagos and the Niger Protectorate on the coast and from the French territories of the Upper Niger.

In 1901, Nigeria became a British protectorate and in 1914, the northern and southern provinces of the “Niger area”<sup>10</sup> while Calabar and Lagos were formally amalgamated as the *Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria* but for administrative purposes, Nigeria remained divided into the northern and southern provinces and Lagos colony. On the other hand, 'Naija' is a colloquial contraction which appears to shed the colonial burden and lexical ambiguity attached to the name 'Nigeria'. In identity work, “groups of language users who seek to create solidarity among themselves, or to distance themselves from others, invariably *do* identify such features of language, at whatever level is most available or appropriate, and use them” (Sebba, 2009a:40, italics in original). The use of 'Naija' can be interpreted as an attempt to forge an indigenous sense of nationalism and at the same time to

---

<sup>10</sup> This is derived from River Niger.



distance oneself from an identity that is perceived as foisted.

Abati's (2009) earlier mentioned article generated a firestorm of criticisms in the Nigerian blogosphere from young adults who took exceptions to his characterisation of the younger generation as a waste and uncultured. The leading voice for the youth is from the blog of Banky W<sup>11</sup>. The excerpts as follows:

Furthermore, on the topic of Names and abbreviations let's set a few things straight. Nigerzie is actually spelt Nigezie and is not an abbreviation for Nigeria. It's a TV Show, much like Soundcity or Hip TV, except they choose to incorporate "representing Nigeria" in their name. It's like the "United Colors of Bennetton", or DKNY, both companies that choose to represent their locations or origins in their name. Also, for the record, Gidi doesn't mean Nigeria either. It's a term for Lagos... coined from "Las Gidi". And as far as the popular term "Naija" goes, who remembers Shina Peters singing "? Naija lo wa yi o o o, wa jo, afro juju lo gb'ode ?" I hate to point out that our generation did not come up with that term... the "golden age" that you long for did.

Our country has not yet given us steady electricity, adequate education, safety from armed robbers or standard healthcare, yet artistes have risen like the Roses that grow from Concrete... and these very artistes love and represent their country proudly on a global stage. This music industry has given hope, jobs and income to countless youth of today. We are Rappers, Singers, Producers, Sound Engineers, Managers, Promoters, Marketing Consultants, Record Label Owners and we will not apologize for making the best of our circumstances ...

We know we have a moral responsibility when it comes to our Creative works. Some of us pay more attention to it than others, and there is (sic) lots of ground to cover up. But how about a little appreciation and help, instead of trying to tear us down and discredit us? Time will tell whose music will last and become evergreen, but it is not in anyone's place to judge; and for the record, can we just accept that fact that hip hop music is an artform that is probably here to stay... I mean for goodness sake the Grammy's has!! Instead of fighting the change, we should learn to embrace it. I thank God for people like the great Adewale Ayuba that have reached across to our generation to collaborate with, bridge the gap, and help us improve.

*We want to learn but your generation has to teach. We want to read but the Government must provide libraries. We want to go to school but the lecturers keep going on strike. We want to travel but previous generations*

---

<sup>11</sup> June 22, 2009 <http://bankyw.blogspot.com/2009/06/my-response-to-recent-guardian.html>  
There were 215 comments from blog readers to this post.

*messed up so they won't give out visas. Most of (sic) prefer having our own live bands but the income needed to support that is not forthcoming.*

I suggest that you buy whole albums and look at the body of work. Listen to the entire CD's. I think you'll find that more often than not, Nigerian artistes are doing a pretty good job of representing this great Country of Nigeria. *Naija Till We Die. Yes Boss.* (Underline and italics added)

Readers' comments on this post show that this matter is an emotional one both for older and younger Nigerians. Interestingly, the use of the old media (newspaper column) by Abati and the new media (blog) by Banky W for the dialogue can be said to be symbolic of generational shift in public discourse. A few of the comments are below:

June 23, 2009 4:00 AM                      EziMusik said...<sup>12</sup>

Even before Flora Shaw, the future wife of Baron Lugard, a British colonial administrator coined the term "Nigeria" Our people have had an extensive history, based on archaeological evidence, a history that dates back to at least 9000 BCE. With all due respect, Mr. Abati's apparent nostalgia and reverence for the name "Nigeria" is very misguided, as it seems like an attempt to protect a name given to us, at the cost of impertinence to us as a people." As Banky so eloquently states, a new generation is born; such a generation should be commended for developing a fresh sense of nationality, be it by creating our own art forms, ways of expression, or by following in the footsteps of our great predecessors.

June 23, 2009 5:53 AM                      Maynezee said...<sup>13</sup>

I don't agree with all the lyrics in 2days music, but if he wishes to address that then he should stick to the point. He dares to flash his generation in our faces even in the current situation of Nigeria where dis so-called generation of his brought us to? How many Senators of his generation can sing the National Anthem? How many of them understand what it means even beyond singing it, because if they understood it they wouldn't act the way they do. Wer is the man who designed the Nigerian flag? Was he not abandoned in Oyo state before THIS GENERATION had a programme that donated money to him?

He talks of Identity Crisis, what identity? did his generation hand down any identity? what reputation is he trying to protect, an identity that already needs REBRANDING???

---

<sup>12</sup> <http://bankyw.blogspot.com/2009/06/my-response-to-recent-guardian.html?showComment=1245754833849#c8226696110805151912>

<sup>13</sup> <http://bankyw.blogspot.com/2009/06/my-response-to-recent-guardian.html?showComment=1245761593812#c8859860262562977386>

June 23, 2009 12:38 PM

Teeyah said...<sup>14</sup>

... I dare say that the identity adopted and accepted by the people of a place holds a lot more significance to me than that forged for it by a foreign lord and his 'fair lady'.

June 24, 2009 12:21 AM

finz said...<sup>15</sup>

Well said, Banky! I'm really impressed with the respectful way in which you expressed your disagreement with Mr. Abati's (who is actually one of my favourite journalists) piece. You are right in that he didn't do any thorough research. I always thought "Naija" was an affectionate way of referring to our country. As for the other spellings, '9ja' and 'Nija', I think that just comes from the shorthand/fast-typing/SMS world in which we live.

It's true that some songs are meaningless and vulgar, but it's up to the public to decide if they enjoy that kind of music or not. Let us continue to support the Naija artistes we like without bringing down those who do not catch our fancy.

Excerpts of the second main blog response to Abati's article from Aribaba & The 40 Touts<sup>16</sup> are:

The fact that the creation/naming of Nigeria by a British woman, Flora Shaw, in a "special romantic moment" is being held up as something to respect and revere is troubling to me. I personally see no reason why I should respect the fact that British Colonialist came to Africa, dismantled (for the most part by force) kingdoms like the Fulani Kingdom, Yoruba Kingdom, Hausa Empire, Benin Kingdom, the Kindom of Nri (igbo) etc, and decided to create a country called "Nigeria". Nigeria I believe was not created with some romantic undertone. It was created in the name of resource control, and although I am not advocating for the dismantling of modern day Nigeria, nor am I saying we should change the name of the country, I see no reason why I should respect the sanctity of the way the country was named. Heck, who knows? Lord Lugard and his "mistress" might have been doing ungodly deeds when they decided to come up with the name Nigeria. I personally will take the name "Naija" any day over Nigeria. At least I know the name Naija was thought of by a Naija person, and not two British lovers looking over the River Niger, thinking of how to control the native resources for Great Britain's gain. To be honest, my use of the word Nigeria has been limited to my green passport, and official documents.

... The Nigerian culture and identity today is heading towards what I call "For Naija, By Naija." When you take influences from Biggie and Sunny

<sup>14</sup> <http://bankyw.blogspot.com/2009/06/my-response-to-recent-guardian.html?showComment=1245785928147#c1584932065998388598>

<sup>15</sup> <http://bankyw.blogspot.com/2009/06/my-response-to-recent-guardian.html?showComment=1245828097879#c1679132571752795174>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.jaguda.com/2009/06/24/new-naija-generation-identity-crisis-or-identity-redefinition>

Ade, you get MI's song "Anoti," or you take R. Kelly and mix in Fela, you get Banky's Song "Capable." The Naija youth culture today is redefined to what the average naija youth can relate to. This, I fully support, and see no reason why it should be looked upon as irreverent or way-ward.

So in conclusion, I'd like to say that I'm happy with the new generation of Nigerians we have today, and although we have our fair share of bad eggs just like the past generation did, I'm happy with our generation and the cultural identity we are creating. We can now go to a naija party and listen to music by naija artists all night long. We wear our ankara clothing with pride. We are taking more pride in our culture instead of raining curses on it, and calling it local. The new naija culture is not traditional, but it's what we've defined for ourselves. A blend of what we grew up learning and what we know as our traditional culture. God Bless Naija & God punish all our enemies including Lord Lugard

As with Banky W's blog post, the underlined portions of Aribaba's indicate a nationalistic preference for 'Naija' as the new typography for Nigerianness. The choice is a resentment towards colonialism and officialdom. However, it is erroneously held as a creation of the younger generation but we shall shortly show that that is not the case. The views of two readers of this blog are presented below:

June 25, 2009 at 12:18 AM      akaBagucci said...<sup>17</sup>

I think Dr Abati raised a few valid points in characterizing the lack of a national identity – but as you rightly point out, perhaps it is not our fault that we lack a national ethos.....Perhaps the 'bastardization' of the Nigeria (sic) name into 'Naija', 'Naij' or what ever other moniker exists has actually done more to rally a generation of Nigerians around the cause of national belief than anything the older generation has done/ not done...

June 24, 2009 at 5:03 PM      Dayo said...<sup>18</sup>

Very well said. I agree with you a 100%. The older generation did not give us a lot to be proud of regarding Nigeria. We literally ran with "We are the future leaders of tomorrow" and decided to redefine our culture, music, style and hopefully re-write history to reflect what Nigeria..my bad, NAIJA really should be.

---

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.jaguda.com/2009/06/24/new-naija-generation-identity-crisis-or-identity-redefinition/comment-page-1/#comment-1369>

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.jaguda.com/2009/06/24/new-naija-generation-identity-crisis-or-identity-redefinition/comment-page-1/#comment-1365>

My Naija is a place that discards the cultural intolerance of our parents generation, that embraces “Proudly Naija” concept and spins in into a multi-million dollar industry.

My Naija is a place where our youth are motivated and see every challenge as an opportunity to prove to the world that we are better than what they show in western media.

Finally, My Naija does not need Lord Lugard and his cronies to tell me how to act or speak!

A new twist was added to this debate recently on November 15, 2010 when Prof. Dora Akunyili, speaking in her official designation as the Minister of Information and Communication, was reported in the Nigerian *ThisDay* newspaper to have disparaged and discouraged the further use of Naija. The news story states that:

The Federal Government yesterday in Abuja condemned in strong terms the use of Naija in place of Nigeria, saying such usage is very uncharitable and unpatriotic.

Akunyili, who frowned at the continuous misrepresentation of the country's official name in place of a corrupt version said: "It is very offensive to call Nigeria 'Naija'. We are making plans to write companies to stop using the word Naija. I have heard that name Naija in adverts. I want them to go back and remove that word.

"If anybody says this is Naija, ask the person, 'Where is Naija?' We have to stop this word because it is catching up with the young. If we don't put a stop to its usage now, it will continue to project us wrongly," she said.

As expected, this report did not go down well with bloggers and Nigerian netizens, and responses to it are similar to the ones already expressed when Abati wrote his article 17 months earlier. As of November 19, 2010 (four days after the report), the story has generated at least 136 comments from the newspaper's online readers alone. Readers' sentiment is that the positives of adopting Naija as a national identity construct far outweigh those of the official term. Surprisingly, more people support the use of Naija than those who oppose it, and the proponents regard it as a FUBU (For Us By Us) construct.

We hereby examine the claims and counter-claims of the occurrences and use of the spelling variants in historical contexts, especially the genesis of *Naija*. Thanks to Michel et. al's (2011) “culturomics”<sup>19</sup> and Google Labs N-gram viewer<sup>20</sup> of digitized books of 500 billion words from 1800 to 2000, it is possible to trace the historical trajectories of 'Naija' and 'Nigeria' in writing. It has been mentioned that the word 'Nigeria' first appeared in writing in 1897 but 'Naija' has been in writing long before then, although not primarily referring to anything Nigerian. *Naija* has an Islamic religious connotation and it is also a word in, at least, the following five languages: Japanese, an Indian language, Wolof, a language in Sierra Leone, and Hausa.

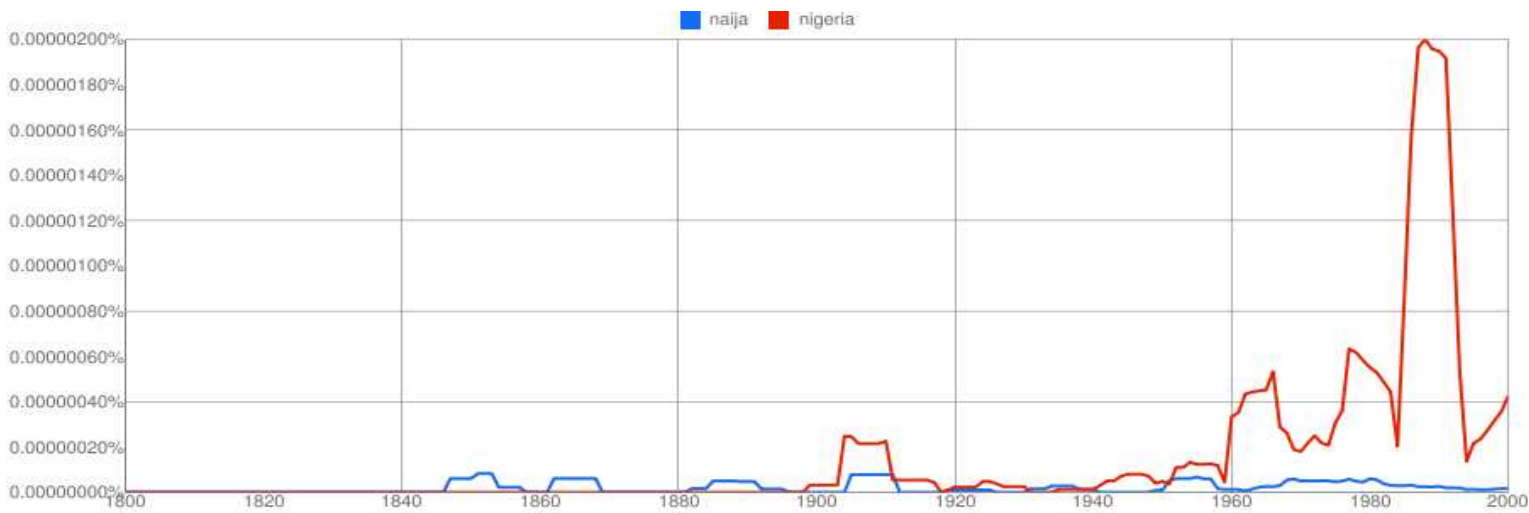


Figure 10: Typographic occurrences of 'naija' and 'nigeria' in written documents

While one cautiously comments on the diagram in Figure 10 and Table 4, one wonders if there is any association between the 1850 use of the word in Arabic and the 1986 occurrence in Hausa because of the wholesale incorporation of Arabic words into the Hausa language by virtue of religious influences. Kone's (1949) publication appears to be the first to directly link the word with Nigeria by reference to Mungo Park and River Niger (albeit in a non-Nigerian language). Nzekwu (1961) seems to be the first indigenous author to write 'River *Naija*'

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.culturomics.org>

<sup>20</sup> <http://ngrams.googlelabs.com>

instead of River Niger. But by the year 2000 when McLuckie & McPhail wrote their biography of Saro-Wiwa, 'Naija' as a word has become an established informal reference to Nigeria(ns), at least in print

Table 4: *Occurrences of Naija in written form from 1800 – 2000.*

Date	Document	Language	Type
1839	<i>Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan</i> , Asiatic Society of Japan  Adjectives are accordingly given in the stem form, as <b>naija</b> , take, for nagaki, takeki (Colloquial nagai, takei). Verbs are given in the conclusive form of the present tense, as semu (colloq. semeni), "to press upon," sugu ...	Japanese ?	
1850	<i>The Madras Journal of Literature and Science</i> , Volume 16 By Madras Literary Society and Auxiliary of the Royal Asiatic Society (p. 358):  MAHOMEDAN RELIGIOUS BUILDINGS.  The Shrines of Moulana Sahib a Mahomedan Saint of great repute as well as that of <b>Naija</b> Sahib are held in most respect amongst the Mahomedans, and are endowed with lands for their support; of the places of worship there are but five kept in order whilst as many as twenty-eight are in a state of disrepair, more or less no provision being made for them; the following is a detailed account of the Mahomedan Religious Buildings that enjoy endowments.	Arabic?	Religious
1865	<i>Wit and Wisdom from West Africa; or, A Book of Proverbial Philosophy, Idioms ...</i> by Sir Richard Francis Burton (p. 25): Proverbs in the Wolof tongue  140. Kou nga ni vaukal ma, dou la vaukal fou la <b>naija</b> . He who says "Scratch me!" shall not be scratched where he wishes.	Wolof	Proverb
1949	S.M. Kone, <i>Mango Paaki ke <b>Naija</b>-yei</i> (Mungo Park and the Niger), pp. 15, P.L.B.		

	<p>Cited in:  <i>African Language Review</i>, Volumes 1-2 (1962:55), Fourah Bay College, University College of Sierra Leone.  ...[written by the Government Department of Agriculture]  [Farming books] (A Sierra Leone Farmer's Year)</p>		
1959	<p><i>Siamese Pottery in Indonesia</i> by Charles Nelson Spinks, Siam Society:</p> <p>The Chinese lung (U), or dragon, like its counterpart the <b>naija</b>, or serpent, in the mythology and tradition of India, was a being closely associated with water, geomancy and curative powers.</p>	Indian language?	Snake ?
1961	<p>Onuora Nzekwu, <i>Wand of Noble Wood</i> (pp. 8, 166):</p> <p>It was however, the first time, since his accession twenty-four years ago, that he had travelled westwards across the <b>River Naija</b> ...</p> <p>At break of day I took a taxi to the Public Works Department ferry and crossed the <b>River Naija</b> to Enuani.</p>	Nigerian	River
1982	<p><i>Major Companies of Nigeria</i> by Marie Lawn (p.70)  Graham &amp; Trotman, Business &amp; Economics - 328 pages</p> <p>Paper conversion. manufacturers' representatives  Associated Companies: <b>Naija Lion</b>, London  Principal Bankers: Nigeria Merchant Bank Limited; First Bank of Nigeria Ltd  Financial Information</p>	Nigerian	Company
1986	<p><i>Ahmadu Bello, Sardauna of Sokoto: Values and Leadership in Nigeria</i> by John N. Paden (p. 781):</p> <p>(28) Allah kara tabbata mallakar Nijeriya / Gafirimiya.  (29) Domin Kabilar din, Ilorin da <b>Naija</b> / Duk sun tuba sun musulunta / Sun bi Firimiyan Nijeriya.</p>	Hausa	Proper name
1998	<p>ON-LINE Information Guide. <i>Agenda: a Journal about Women and Gender</i> (p. 105):</p> <p>Name: <b>Naija-women</b>  Description: The mailing list is a forum for discussing issues affecting Nigerian and other African women and for the exchange of news items relevant to African women. To subscribe forward an introduction of yourself to: <a href="mailto:naija-women@gradient.cis.upeannnd.edu">naija-women@gradient.cis.upeannnd.edu</a> and type in subscribe <b>Naija-women</b> in the subject line.</p>	Nigerian	Email list



2000	<p><i>Ken Saro-Wiwa: Writer and Political Activist</i> by Craig W. McLuckie &amp; Aubrey McPhail (p. 139):</p> <p>The next day, my screen exploded with mail, all of it about Saro-Wiwa and the meaning of his death for Nigeria. There were obituaries, poems, hastily scratched out but very heartfelt dirges, and a unity that I have never before seen in <b>Naija</b>: a unity that, although it technically lasted about a week, still has lingering effects to the present day.</p>	Nigerian	Biography

In the next chapter of the present study, we provide the history of Internet discourse and activities by Nigerians. For now, we can conclusively state that corpus evidence from the archive of informal Nigerian CMC in the 1990s is contrary to the media myth surrounding the genesis and generational adoption of 'Naija' as an identity marker. Moreover, the claim about the penchant for shortenings and abbreviations in CMC (by Nigerian youth) is also placed in the right context. Diasporan Nigerians in North America were the first set of Nigerians to establish a Nigerian presence in Internet discourse in the early 1990s (and these were not teenagers but professionals). As far as informal Internet discourse is concerned, *Naija* was first used in electronic discourse in 1991 with the formation of the premier Nigerian listserv, *Naija-net* (Bastian, 1999; Ifukor, in press/2011a; Moran, 2000). An unedited post in the Nigerian Usenet (*soc.culture.nigeria*) gives a clearer picture on the matter<sup>21</sup>:

Sep 4 1996, 8:00 am

Newsgroups: soc.culture.nigeria  
From: Ugonna Echeruo <ech...@mit.edu>  
Date: 1996/09/04  
Subject: INFORMATION ABOUT NAIJANET

>INFORMATION ABOUT NAIJANET <naija...@mitvma.mit.edu>  
>-----  
>PURPOSE OF NAIJANET  
>- - - - -

<sup>21</sup> [http://groups.google.com/group/soc.culture.nigeria/browse\\_thread/thread/3ecbbb7c09fc0c1b/dbd7e8ae954deaf0?q=naijanet](http://groups.google.com/group/soc.culture.nigeria/browse_thread/thread/3ecbbb7c09fc0c1b/dbd7e8ae954deaf0?q=naijanet)

>Naijanet is a mailing list for Nigerians and friends of Nigeria.  
>This electronic mailing list is a free forum for discussion, debate,  
>the sharing and formulation of ideas that concern Nigeria.

>Postings can cover any topic of choice. This includes politics,  
>economics, culture, education, history, geography, religion,  
>architecture, medicine, development, etc. Postings may include news,  
>opinions, observations, humor, announcements, or requests. If it has  
>anything to do with Nigeria, it can be discussed.

>The use of the network is a privilege, not a right, which may be  
>temporarily revoked at any time for abusive conduct. Such conduct  
>would include the placing of unlawful information on a system, the  
>use of abusive or otherwise objectionable language in either public  
>or private messages; the sending of messages that are likely to result  
>in the loss of recipients' work or systems; the sending of "chain  
>letters", or "broadcast" messages to lists or individuals, and any  
>other type of use which would cause congestion of the networks or  
>otherwise interfere with the work of others.

#### >DUES ON NAIJANET

>- - - - -

>There are no dues associated with Naijanet. The only costs are for  
>those members that subscribe to commercial internet or gateway  
>providers. Naijanet itself has no dues, no fees, no charges, no  
>budget, pays no salaries, and funds no projects. In short, Naijanet  
>has no financial operations.

#### >NAIJANET MEMBERSHIP

>- - - - -

>To join, a person must send an e-mail message to the List server:  
><lists...@mitvma.mit.edu>. This is the address  
>for removal from the list also, either permanently or temporarily.

>To subscribe send an email message to **LISTS...@MITVMA.MIT.EDU**  
>and in the body of the message (not the subject!)  
>include this command:

>subscribe NAIJANET <your\_full\_name>

>You will get more information about how to use naijanet upon  
>subscription to naijanet. Please read it and keep for future  
>reference.

>to unsubscribe from the new list send an email message to  
>**LISTS...@MITVMA.MIT.EDU**  
>and in the body of the message (not the subject!)  
>include this command:

#### >SIGNOFF NAIJANET

>or

>UNSUBSCRIBE NAIJANET

>The List Administrator has the sole right to remove anyone on the  
>list. This can be when someone either repeatedly contravenes the  
>etiquette of the net, or continuously sends mail that is irrelevant  
>to Nigeria or Nigerians. The ultimate penalty of removal shall only  
>be exercised after at least three private warnings to the offender.  
>Notice of such removal shall be publicly announced on NaijaNet.

>VOLUME ON NAIJANET

>- - - - -  
>Naijanet has no political, religious, or economic affiliation, and  
>draws its strength from the diversity of opinions expressed by its  
>members, thus reflecting the full make-up of Nigerians. Naijanet  
>takes pride in the level of discussion that occurs on the network.  
>However, with over 500 subscribers, the volume of mail on the net is  
>quite high.

>ASSOCIATE ORGANISATIONS

>- - - - -

>ANA

>\*\*\*\*\*  
\*\*\*\*\*

>Members of Naijanet who are interested in a more pro-active  
>involvement are encouraged to join a companion organisation, the  
>Association of Nigerians Abroad (ANA). A non-partisan organisation,  
>ANA provides the best means of \_actively getting involved\_ in the  
>\*doing something\* about Nigeria. It's also open to all Nigerians,  
>and to friends of Nigeria as associate members. For more information,  
>please contact ANA at: <ANA-requ...@quincy.med.harvard.edu>

>RULES OF NAIJANET <naija...@mitvma.mit.edu>

>- - - - -

>PLEASE SAVE A COPY OF THIS MESSAGE FOR YOUR RECORDS

>If you read much e-mail, you'll see a lot of messages that should  
>never have been sent -- and that the sender probably wishes he or  
>she hadn't sent. To prevent making such mistakes yourself, you  
>should develop some "netiquette". Here's some advice:

>1. Never commit anything to e-mail that you wouldn't want to become  
>public knowledge. You never really know who may end up reading your  
>e-mail. This may be on purpose, or by mistake, either yours or a  
>misbehaving computer's. The threat does not end when the mail is  
>deleted as e-mail messages are frequently caught in system backups  
>and can be resurrected.

>2. Be diplomatic. Use appropriate language. Don't insult people.  
>We are here to exchange ideas, learn from each other and get things  
>accomplished. Personal attacks on individual members should be kept  
>personal; send a private message to that individual and deal with it

>off the general net.

>3. Think before you write. Many times messages are worded so poorly  
>you can only guess at the real meaning. Keep messages within a single  
>thread.

>4. Provide detailed information. However, a note of warning: include  
>only relevant information. Having asked you to give detailed  
>information, we will now ask you to make sure you don't provide  
>unnecessary information.

>5. Writers frequently approach e-mail as a friendly conversation,  
>but recipients often view e-mail as a cast-in-stone letter. You might  
>have had a wry smile on your face when you wrote the note, but that  
>wry smile doesn't cross the network. You also can't control when the  
>message will be read, so it might be recieved (sic) at the worst possible  
>moment.

>6. Don't use exotic features of your terminal (bold, italics, etc.).  
>These frequently send a string of control characters which wreak  
>havoc on some types of terminals.

>7. Read your message before you send it and decide if you'll regret  
>it in the morning. On most systems, once you send it you are committed  
>to it.

>Aside from basic netiquette, there are a couple of style guidelines  
>that, if followed, make e-mail easier to read understand (sic):

>8. Keep the line length reasonable (less than 60 characters). You  
>want it to display on just about any terminal. If the note gets  
>forwarded it might be indented by a tab character (usually 8 columns).  
>Messages that consist of a single extremely long line are particularly  
>obnoxious. You have a RETURN key; use it!

>9. Use mixed case. Even though some operating systems don't  
>understand lower-case letters, virtually all modern terminals can  
>generate them. All uppercase sounds harsh, like yelling (shouting)  
>and are more difficult to read. UPPERCASE CAN BE USED FOR EMPHASIS!

>10. Please sign your name (or identify yourself) on every e-mail  
>posted to the general net. Most people cannot translate e-mail  
>addresses to proper names.

>11. If you want to be addressed properly, please sign your name with  
>the appropriate title: Chief, Obong, Opanin, Madam, Sir, Mr., Ms., Dr.,  
>Mrs., etc...

>12. When quoting portions of someone's posting to which you are  
>replying, please do not quote or include the entire article. Quote  
>just enough of it to put your reply in context. It helps people read  
>your reply with interest. Private messages, whether from members or  
>non-members, should only be posted on NaijaNet with the author's

>permission.

>13. Do not flame anyone for misspellings, typos, or grammatical errors.  
>Misspellings and typos are circumstantial. The important thing to do is  
>read posts with understanding of the underlying message the writer is  
>conveying.

>14. NaijaNet is for free debate; do not try to force your opinions  
>on others.

>15. Do not post personal messages (specifically for one particular  
>individual) to the net at large.

>Communicating through a computer system may be convenient, but it  
>sometimes lacks the personal touch. When you write an electronic  
>message, it is easy for someone to misinterpret it. You know what you  
>mean, but it may be more difficult to convey the intended meaning  
>with written words.

>To make electronic communication more personal, you can use acronyms  
>in your messages. Although the following list is not complete, it  
>will get you started:

>BTW      By the way  
>FWIW      For what it's worth  
>IMHO      In my humble opinion  
>ROFL      Rolling on the floor, laughing  
>TIA       Thanks in advance  
>FYI       For Your Information  
>NRN       No Reply Necessary <-- use liberally!!! :)  
>:-)       Happy, smiling, joking  
>;-)       Wink, joking  
><g>       Grinning, joking  
><BG>      BIG grin

>There are many others which are used less frequently. In general,  
>their meanings are pretty discernible, so you'll have to figure them  
>out for yourself. :-)

>All current members should take note of this message. It will be  
>sent to all new members, and will be posted to the general net  
>periodically. Anybody who does not adhere to these guidelines will  
>get three "friendly" reminders from the list administrator. Subsequent  
>violations may result in the removal of the offender from the list.

> \_\_\_\_\_

Netiquette 13 above allows for typographic variations (and errors) provided readers are able to decode the message the author intended to be passed across, and surprisingly the use of abbreviations and shortenings is encouraged for

pragmatically emotive purposes. For the synergy of diasporan sense of community formation and the technological constraints of CMC writing, literate professional diasporan Nigerians pioneered the use of *Naija* as a nationalistic identity marker and the use of shortcuts in CMC while younger Nigerians today are the vanguard of these.

The use of 'Naija' for identity work and the tendency for shortenings and shortcuts in electronic discourse both pre-date blogging and text messaging (at least in the Nigerian context). SMS and social media have become avenues of discourse for younger Nigerians but we contend that the generational embrace of the new typology and writing technique is driven by two main factors: ideology and technology. We give five reasons to support this argument.

1. *The domestication / appropriation of globalised graphemic innovations / writing practices by Nigerian netizens and textizens especially the youth.*

Discursive evidence from the written explanations /responses given by Nigerian youth above reveals that the typography has been adopted as a more indigenous and appropriate concept for defining their Nigerianness. Then the use of technology represents the domestication of globalised graphemic conventions / innovations for symbolic local creativity.

2. *Creativity induced by medium constraints of new media and mobile technologies.*

Following Herring (1998), the spelling peculiarities of CMC are less of errors caused by inattention or lack of the knowledge of standard forms. Rather, these are intentional and are mostly “deliberate choices made by users to economize on typing effort, mimic spoken language features, or express themselves creatively” (Herring, 2001). The ease with which creativity is enhanced in electronic discourse and the innovative dispositions of youths make online platforms appealing to the youths because these afford them “a place to have a voice, to

engage in important identity work, and to create texts around local, national and global issues that are important to them” (McGinnis, Goodstein-Stolzenberga and Saliania, 2007).

3. *Ideological struggle and resistance to officialdom.*

Typographic choice is not only generational but also a means for ideological struggle, resistance to officialdom, and even 'spelling rebellion' as Sebba (2003) puts it. Blog posts and responses above from Nigerian youth confirm this.

4. *Zipf's principle of least effort or linguistic economy.*

According to Zipf (1949:1),

[T]he Principle of Least Effort means, for example, that a person in solving his immediate problems will view these against the background of his probable future problems, as estimated by himself. Moreover he will strive to solve his problems in such a way as to minimize the total work that he must expend in solving both his immediate problems and his probable future problems. That in turn means that the person will strive to minimize the probable average rate of his work-expenditure (over time). And in so doing he will be minimizing his effort, by our definition of effort. Least effort, therefore, is a variant of least work.

This is a plausible explanation for the colloquial contraction of *Naija* for identity work and the general tendencies for shortenings and shortcuts in Nigerian Internet and CMC discourse.

5. *Ethnolinguistic nationalism.*

In expressing their identity, Nigerians like “speakers for whom national identity is fluid ... exploit whichever identity they want for social gain, often through linguistic behaviour” (Llamas 2010:236). However, the discursive affordances of electronic communication and the plethora of digital texts introduce a new dimension to the traditional national identity question. Following Wodak et. al. (1999 , 2009), we argue that a national collectivity can be established through social practices such as spelling and typography, which lead to the graphemic

representation and negotiation of *homo Nigerianus*.

## **2.2 DATA COMPOSITION METHODS**

There are two types of data employed in this study: corpus and questionnaire data. As proposed by Androutsopoulos & Ziegler (2004), Siebenhaar (2006), and Vandekerckhove & Nobels (2010), a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods provides insightful complementary analysis in the emerging domain of multimodal CMD.

### **2.2.1 CORPORA**

Usage-based compilation of informal electronic discourse is a methodological approach for data composition in current linguistics research. Generally, usage-based approaches represent descriptions and explanations of “actual language used in naturally occurring texts” (Biber, Conrad & Reppen, 2004:1). There is as yet no publicly available ready-made corpus of Nigerian English so our corpus is customized. Broadly, the approximately 1.5 million word corpus of Informal Nigerian Electronic Communication (INEC) comprises systematically but intermittently crawled and culled synchronous and asynchronous data from numerous representative Nigerian emails, listservs, online discussion forums, readers' responses to news stories on the websites of Nigerian newspaper companies, instant messaging, weblogs, Twitter, Facebook and SMS text messages. INEC is an acronym that resonates with Nigerians especially in the first decade of the twenty-first century because this is the same acronym for Nigeria's electoral agency. While there is a deliberate play on the acronym, the choice indicates that the corpus is authentically Nigerian. Its composition began as this author was looking for authentic informal written data by Nigerians to illustrate certain linguistic phenomena in the use of languages by Nigerians. By lurking online in several Nigerian discussion forums and weblogs for a couple of



months, the author was convinced that the World Wide Web offers interesting and inspiring data for linguistic investigation. It unofficially began in 2004 with the manual downloading of news stories from Nigerian websites.

In 2010, the author used an online crawler to download online newspaper readers' responses from the Nigerian *Guardian* newspaper and in December 2010, an online tool known as DiscoverText was used to archive the Facebook comments of President Goodluck Jonathan's (GEJ) Facebook 'friends'. The advantage of using DiscoverText is that it is able to extract multiple posts from the same author in order to avoid the double counting of the same post from the same sender. The web-based component of the corpus is built by manual browsing and web crawling while the SMS data are sourced from the author's network of Nigerian friends and colleagues in Nigeria, Germany, the US and the UK. The data that meet the specification of hybridity are manually extracted after perusing thousands of sites, links and texts.

However, there is a sub-corpus of INEC that we call Purposeful Language Alternation in Nigerian Electronic Texts (PLANET) which mostly include multilingual texts and several kinds of language mixture. Some PLANET data display *hybridity with humour* just as the concept of playfulness adopted for building the corpus is anchored on two principles: playful expressivity (Danet, 1995, 2001) and text-based linguistic creativity. The first incorporates any one of three essential features of playfulness: spontaneity, manifest joy and a sense of humour (Lieberman, 1977:6) while the second principle combines creativity with speech simulation. Danet's (2001) work on Cyberpl@y demonstrates how emotional representation integrates linguistic and socio-typographical aspects of virtual communication as *performance* by enunciating the “overt manifestations of more or less spontaneous playfulness on the computer screen”(p 10). Moreover, pertinent to PLANET is McDowell's (1992:139) conceptual framework of playfulness which is “[t]he creative disposition of language

resources; the manipulation of formal features and processes of language to achieve striking restructuring of familiar discourse alignments”.

For the mobile phone SMS data, an email was sent to this author's chain of friends in Nigeria, Germany, USA, UK and South Africa in early June 2009 soliciting authentic data as follows:

**Subject: Urgent Appeal for Help with Research Data**

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Gracious greetings!

I urgently need your help with private or personal data for my on-going linguistic doctoral research. The work is at a crucial stage and I am meant to present it at the Faculty level early next month but I need SMS (text messaging) data to balance the quota of research materials. As a child of God, I cannot sacrifice sincerity for scholarship and manufacture fictional data. That is why I need your assistance with REAL data by June ending. About twenty (20) or more data from you would suffice.

They may be text messages from you, your spouse, children or close associates AND in principle should meet the following TWO criteria:

1. The texts must have been composed by a Nigerian.
2. They should involve element(s) of Nigerian local languages OR Pidgin alongside English (for example a - e below) :

- (a) Sèbí I asked for your number b4 but you refused ;
- (b) I need ur help biko nu ;
- (c) Your calls are becoming embarrassing, abeg leave me o jàre !
- (d) Honey, I will do as you said o .
- (e) Alhaji, nagode tnk u very much for the money u sent. I got them but pls send more :-)

I promise to maintain the anonymity and privacy of all data and by God's grace you can count on that promise.

Please send them to my email address above or via SMS to my mobile phone number 00949-XXX if you are sending them from Nigeria or +49-XXX from outside Nigeria. If you have a BlackBerry or internet connection on your mobile phone, then it is preferable to send them as email.

This data collection is my private undertaking and I do not receive any funding for it meaning that no third party would have direct access to the data but if you want me to pay for your services please let me know and I will try and see how to go about the payments.

Could you please indicate if you plan to send any? And would you kindly forward this to other trusted brethren who you know would respond in time? Your efforts and assistance are greatly appreciated.

Best and blessed regards,

Presley Ifukor  
Germany

The aim of the request was to ensure that authentic data are sent to the author as respondents were meant to send the texts they had received by the date the email was sent (in order to enhance objectivity). It should be stated however, that allowance was given to some respondents who usually delete SMS from their phone after reading to send new ones they receive. Therefore, a total of 170 texts were forwarded via email and mobile phone to this researcher between June and July 2009.

We also have a small sub-corpus consisting of private and public synchronous CMC which we call Nigerian Internet Chat Exchanges (NICE). In all, the data comprise the following:

Table 5: Data composition

Type		Date / Duration	Quantity
Blogs		January 8, 2005- January 2, 2008	245 individual blog posts
Twitter	Ekiti re-run (ERR)	April 16-August 31, 2009	909 relevant tweets
	Light up Nigeria (LUN)	July 14 - August 9 , 2009 & January 11 – December 31, 2010	
	Enough is Enough (EiE)	March 15 – December 31, 2010	

Facebook	Goodluck Jonathan's Official Page (GEJ)	June 28 – December 31, 2010	32 relevant posts
	GEJ FB Readers' comments	June 28 – December 31, 2010	95, 801 comments from FB 'friends'
The Guardian newspaper	Online readers' responses	January 13, 2006 – July 2010	25, 023 readers' comments
Nigerian Internet Chat Exchanges	Public & private IM (from this author's friends)	August 2009	
Mobile phone texts	SMS	2004 – July 2009	170 SMS (mostly mixed-codes texts)
Online Forum	Nigerian Village Square	2005 – August 2010	130 primary articles with texts from other forum threads

## 2.2 QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire was sent to Nigeria via email in July 2010 and with the generous assistance of senior colleagues and academics in Nigerian institutions of higher learning (e.g. University of Lagos, Akoka; Yaba College of Technology, Lagos; Nnamdi Azikwe University, Awka; University of Agriculture, Abeokuta; Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife; University of Nigeria, Nsukka), 1200 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to randomly sampled Nigerian undergraduates in selected States in Nigeria (e.g. Anambra, Ogun, Osun, Lagos etc). The University of Lagos, Akoka served as the collation point of the completed copies. In total 1,154 copies of the questionnaire were correctly filled out. SPSS, a statistical software, is used for the analysis of the survey responses.

# Part II

This part of the study examines language contact features in the Nigerian CMC in a novel way in terms of Bourdieu's (1977) economics of linguistic exchanges and the Faircloughian (1992) application of intertextuality. Chapter 3 addresses the second major hypothesis of the work using a Nigerian online community as the case study. The virtual community under consideration is called the *Nigerian Village Square* (NVS), '*... a marketplace of ideas*'. As an online discussion forum, NVS combines the features of listservs and newsgroups with a more elegant and user-friendly interface. By linguistic marketing is meant discourse as a vehicle for 'promotional acts' and for 'selling' particular cultures and ideologies to multicultural and multilingual readers/audiences. One interpretation of this is in terms of asserting language rights and linguistic equality. The use of Nigerian languages with Nigerian Pidgin online is promotional and for *existential negotiation*. This results in language mixture which is an instantiation of freedom of speech, freedom of switch and freedom to switch. The underlying pragmatic motivation for top-down language mixture and alternation in Nigerian virtual discourse is attention-getting with the aim of inducing an interdiscursive writer-reader cognitive as well as communicative interactions. Other pragmatic functions of code switching discussed in this chapter include allusive textuality, amusing phaticity, anticipated interactivity, affective expressivity and audience affiliation or alienation among others. Thus, intertextuality is an explanatory technique for investigating previously unexplored phenomena in digital code switching.

In chapter 4, it is argued that the graphemic representation of shibboleths in Nigerian CMC is an act of language crossing, which enunciates the phonological patterns of regional accents of Nigerian English. Rampton's (1995) notion of crossing is employed.

## CHAPTER 3

### LINGUISTIC MARKETING IN INFORMAL INTERNET DISCOURSE

#### 3.1 BACKGROUND ON THE NIGERIAN VILLAGE SQUARE

The virtual community under consideration is called the *Nigerian Village Square* (NVS), “... *a marketplace of ideas*” (NVS homepage). It can otherwise be referred to as a 'virtual sphere' (Papacharissi, 2002) or a form of public sphere 2.0. The traditional public sphere (Habermas, 1964, 1989 [1962], 1992) is a discursive space whose key discussants are citizens, civil society and elected representatives of the state. When democratic deliberation is the goal, public opinions arising from the public sphere represent a collaborative “discursive judgement” with a common understanding about normative standards and significantly “orient toward the discourses of the people” (Hauser, 1998).

Although the existence of a public sphere does not engender *rational discourse*, it presupposes participatory and deliberative discussions (Castells, 2008; Papacharissi, 2002). While CMC technologies augment political discourse in established democracies, new media and mobile technologies create avenues for a virtual sphere among Nigerians. Therefore, the ideal virtual sphere guarantees equal access to all connected netizens, equal right for all languages in netizens' linguistic repertoire, and it fosters democratic deliberation through policy debates, public dialogues and 'online polylogues' (Marcoccia, 2004).

NVS was established in April 2003. It is a discursive site as well as a virtual megaphone with unrestricted message and an unregulated volume, a platform for discursive evaluations of socio-political and economic developments, a middleman for musical and cultural window shopping, and an outlet for catharsis and emotional related issues. In the 'About Us' page, the philosophical background to activities in the Square is explained thus:

In traditional African settings, people from all corners meet at the Village

Square after a hard day's work to sip unadulterated palm-wine, share news, gossip, jokes, music, dance, events and opinions. Visitors to the square are warmly welcomed and can get directions, information and clarify misconceptions.

The Nigerian Village Square has been established to play this role for Nigerians and Friends of Nigeria across the entire globe. We convene in our virtual village square to exchange information about our country, the communities in which we currently reside and the larger world around us. More importantly, ideas developed here enable us improve our lives and advance the country's ideals.

Emphasis is placed on the rich interchange of ideas and opinions in the Nigerian Village Square as opposed to raw news reporting. Newshounds can however access the latest news culled from news portals and wire services, including links to major Nigerian and international newspapers. For relaxation, the trend-setting section on Nigerian and African music, movies and more makes an excellent destination.

NVS encourages intellectual and interactive textual exchanges among registered members in the community (called 'Villagers') and opportunities are given to visitors to participate anonymously in some sections of the forum. The statistics as of November 11, 2010 (11:40 am CET) are as follows: “Threads: 40,398; Posts: 483,763; Members: 15,372; Active Members: 888; Blogs: 148; and Entries: 1,157” (NVS Statistics, 2010/11/11). The decision to focus on the discursive practices of NVS is stylistic because it is a homogenous virtual community with linguistic representations characteristic of literate Nigerians in offline discourse. In terms of CMC classification, NVS is an asynchronous<sup>22</sup> online forum with integrated blogging and synchronicity features like web chat. The communication architecture partly resembles the conversational structure and fragmentation of Internet and Usenet newsgroups (Marcoccia, 2004; von Münchow & Rakotonoelina, 2010) but its discursive structure is multifaceted (Herring, 2007) and it has a fine-grained division of discussions into segments and sections grouped together under topically related threads. For instance, 'The

---

<sup>22</sup> The communicative features of NVS make it a little bit complex to classify. It basically has the mode of asynchronous CMC but it has a section for instant messaging or chat which weakens the classification as asynchronous. Therefore, it is an asynchronous genre with a platform for synchronicity.



Square' has the following segments and sections: Town Hall (The Main Square [News, Politics and current events], Articles and Comments, Awards), Sunny Side (Introductions, The Lounge), Share and Care (Palava Hut, Healthwise), Ideas Exchange (Tech-World, Bookshelf) and Administration Areas (NVS Matters).

Owing to its commitment to charitable causes and social justice, NVS received the 2008 Gathering of Africa's Best (GAB) Award<sup>23</sup> for “Excellence in the area of Community Development using online media”. Some of NVS's societal contributions include the following: in 2006, NVS donated £330 to Ese Alabi's family in the United Kingdom; in 2007, the NVS platform was used for online activism to solicit justice for a diaspora Nigerian who was killed in Spain (the online protests were translated to offline activities in 20 countries around the world on June 29, 2007, the Nigerian National Assembly responded and set up a legislative enquiry, and NVS members donated \$1,200 to the Aikpitanhi family for legal proceedings); also in 2007, through donations from its members £6,000 was raised for the surgical operation of Baby Andrew Duru in India; and in 2008, a father and daughter were reunited after years of separation through a post on NVS 'Palava Hut'. Though not a dating site, two NVS Villagers who met online on the forum are now a married couple<sup>24</sup> and the webmaster confirms that many other relationships have sprouted. In fact, this is how one Villager summarises the role of NVS in online advocacy:

Re: Thank You NVS (Apr 23, 2010 02:54 PM)<sup>25</sup>

I'm yet to see a virtual public space that draws the consciousness of Nigerians and their public officers toward the affairs of the country as the NVS. Honestly, I do sometimes wonder how our past military dictators

---

<sup>23</sup> The GAB Awards was founded in 1999 by *The Trumpet* newspaper (Britain's largest distributed Black newspaper). The event rewards excellence within the community. At the awards ceremony, the best of Africa and friends of Africa come together to network and showcase the very best that Africa has to offer.

<sup>24</sup> <http://nigeriavillagesquare.com/forum/lounge/28145-mulan-weds-shoko.html>

<sup>25</sup> <http://nigeriavillagesquare.com/forum/articles-comments/15585-thank-you-nvs.html#post446388>

would have contained us in an irrepressible platform such as this. Regrettably, they escaped it.

Without gain saying, the effect of NVS has added more impetus to the masses' quest for political, social and economic re-engineering of Nigeria. Certainly, by the time these are actualized, Big-K<sup>26</sup> and his crew would have joined the league of those that stood to be counted when it mattered. The struggle continues.

NVS has undergone a slight structural modification since February 2009 when the screenshot of Figure 11 was captured. However, this has not affected the contents of the messages. The notice is presented in Example 1 and it illustrates the pattern of linguistic eclecticism on NVS. The font variation as well as the highlight is a pragmatic function of attention-getting.

- (1) *Admin no be spirit.* Use the report post button ... if you need admin/moderators' attention.

[Admin is neither omnipresent nor omniscient. Use the report post button if you need attention] (*Nigerian Pidgin – English*, NVS 2009/02/09)

Internet or online discussion forums have also been referred to as bulletin board systems (Döring, 2003), cyberforums (Sperlich, 2005) and Web discussion forums (Androutsopoulos, 2007). Forum discussions are edited interactive discourse (Ferrara et al., 1991) subject to moderation by administrators who ensure compliance with the Forum's policy. From observations, discourse in online forums is informative, interrogative, inspirational, interactional, intertextual, interdiscursive and tends to be informal with interjections.

There exist a few studies on the Nigerian public sphere (e.g. Ayantayo, 2009; Kehinde, 2010; Nwagbara, 2010), but we contend that the virtual sphere offers more Nigerians the discursive affordances closer to the Habermasian public sphere. Even though earlier researches on the Nigerian virtual sphere (Bastian, 1999; Deuber & Hinrichs, 2007; Ifukor, 2010; Moran, 2000; Taiwo, 2010a,

---

<sup>26</sup> Big-K is the online identity of the webmaster of NVS.

2010b) are insightful, they have not explored the vertical interdiscursive language switching which is a regular feature of electronic discourse in Nigerian online forums. The present investigation addresses this deficit in a principled computer-mediated discourse analysis with online ethnography (Androutsopoulos, 2008, 2010).

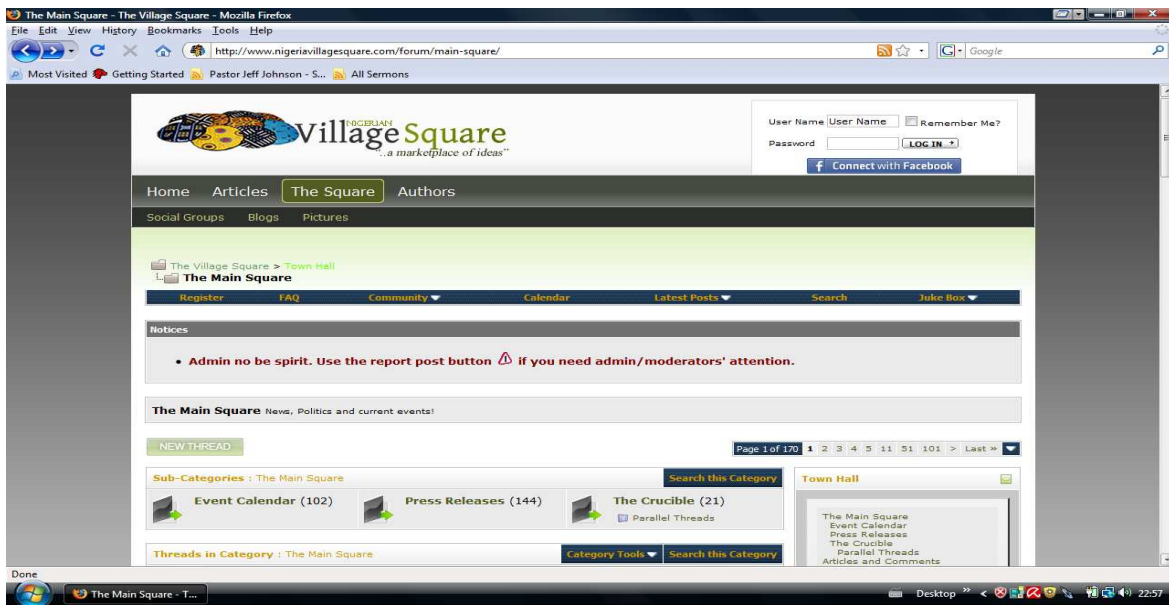


Figure 11: NVS Main Square notice on February 9, 2009

In addressing the research deficit mentioned above, the present study seeks to validate the following hypotheses:

(I). The proficiency and literacy level of netizens in languages in their linguistic repertoire will determine the quantity of languages used by them in electronic discourse. Therefore, a ranking of languages according to their frequency of usage for Nigerian netizens would be as follows:

English > Nigerian Pidgin > Yoruba > Igbo > Hausa > Others

(II). Intertextuality, and by extension interdiscursivity, is an explanatory paradigm for modelling the pragmatics of linguistic heterogeneity in electronic discourse.

The argument that language mixture vis-à-vis code alternation is an

interdiscursive strategy has been expressed by Argenter (2001) in his paper on “Code-switching and Dialogism” and by Jones (1995) in a paper titled “Code-switching, Intertextuality and Hegemony”. For instance, Argenter analyzes recorded verbal practices (four wedding songs and one festive song) of Catalan Jews in the 14th and 15th centuries to argue that Catalan -Hebrew poetic code switching is an illustration of intertextuality, polyphony and dialogism. Extending this argument, we assert that intertextuality in electronic discourse is intentional and more creative because it is consciously done for certain pragmatic effects on interactants. And to our knowledge, top-down interdiscursive switching is yet to be accounted for in written/digital code switching research.

In this chapter, it was decided that articles posted to the Nigerian Village Square can be used to explicate the phenomena under investigation. The NVS articles selected for this study are not news stories but mainly opinion pieces written by fifteen Nigerian writers (11 males and 4 females) some of whom are reputable in the academia, civil society and journalism<sup>27</sup>. These writers use their real names except for one woman who decides to write under a pseudonym.

The articles' section of NVS is where intellectual cross-fertilisation of ideas is predominant and policy debates are carried out. The headlines of 130 NVS articles are examined and classified according to the pattern of language mixture and intertextuality as the breakdown in Table 6 shows. Against the backdrop of the articles' formal style, it is interesting to see how intertextuality and code switching reveal the degree of discursive informality in the articles. And the style is akin to the blogging practices of Nigerians (Ifukor, 2010) in terms of dialogical interaction with sociocultural flavour.

---

<sup>27</sup> Taiwo (2010b) calls some of them leftist Nigerian writers.

Table 6: *Intertextuality and Heterogeneity of NVS Articles' Headlines*

	Pattern of Language (s) Involved	Total	%	Author's Ref & Date	Examples	Dynamic Equivalence / Translation
I	Nigerian Pidgin ONLY	23	17.7	UN20061117	Yanga Dey Sleep	Wordplay on the title of one of Fela's satirical songs <sup>1</sup> ; an idiom equivalent to “let sleeping dogs lie”
II				UN20061203	Person Wey Woman No Kill	Loved dearly by a woman
III				UN20061220	Una No Dey Go Christmas?	Aren't you travelling home this Christmas?
IV				PCD20100531	Jonathan, ...luck Dey Finish O!	Jonathan, one can run out of luck, you know!
V				JG20060831	Una well done o!	Phatic expression for approval / greetings etc
VI	<i>Nigerian Pidgin – English</i>	8	6.2	UN20050830	<i>Monkey No Fine: Response to Seyi Oduyela</i>	An aphorism equivalent to “beauty is in the eyes of the beholder”
VII				UN20070321	<i>No Be You Say You Be Oga (An NBC Scam Baiting Special)</i>	Thought you were an experienced trickster
VIII				PA20091018	<i>Banki Pass Banki: Of Elite Excess And Atiku Abubakar</i>	Some banks are better than others:
IX	<i>English – Nigerian Pidgin</i>	5	3.8	RA20050215	Senators Want Pay-For-Life: <i>Na wa O!</i>	This is outrageous!
X				PCD20060801	Our Leaders Have Made	... This Nigeria!

1 Olatunji (2007) examines Fela Anikulapo-Kuti's and other musicians' use of Nigerian Pidgin in songs as satire

					Us Mad... <i>This Nigeria Sef!</i>	
XI	Yoruba – <i>Nigerian Pidgin</i>	2	1.5	SS20060419	O je B'oshe je ( <i>E Get as e Be</i> )	All is not well
XII				SS20061229	Kunle o L'ambition, <i>Suegbe Na Pako</i> , and Adanrin Kogba, Kogba Oko Iya Alamala***	The title of one of Fela's satirical songs; docility
XIII	Yoruba ONLY	9	6.9	PA20090421	Oju L'Oro Wa!	Face metaphor: literally, face is the abode of discourse! (Satire on <i>Facebook</i> )
XIV				SS20060701	Ekilo Fun Boo O, Hmm!!!	Warn Boo, Hmm !!!
XV	Yoruba – English	13	10	PA20100323	“ <i>Ara Eko, Ara Oke</i> ”: Lagos, Culture, And The Rest Of Us	Expression of geographical class war: Lagosians versus other rural migrants
XVI				SS20060430	<i>Oko Iyawo</i> : Akinyele Comes of Age	Bridegroom
XVII	English – <i>Yoruba</i>	12	9.2	PCD20070115	Nigeria, No Fuel, No Water... <i>A fi ete s'ile a npa lapalapa</i>	... Chasing shadows
XVIII				JG20060513	For Sure <i>Ni...</i>	It's certain / It's for sure .. (Allusion to a song title)
XIX	Igbo ONLY	3	2.3	UN20060823	Omalicha Nwa	The beautiful one
XX				SCO20070722	Di Na Nwunye Obodo Oyibo	Overseas husbands and wives
XXI	<i>Igbo</i> – English	4	3.1	UN20070514	<i>Nke Onye Chiri Ya Zaa!</i> (On Igbo Titles)	May each answer to their title
XXII				UN20070102	<i>Ewu Nwadiana</i> And All	The traditional rite of killing a goat for the

					That Jazz	relatives of one's mother
XXIII	English – <i>Igbo</i>	4	3.1	VE20070121	Blogging: The New <i>Ebe Ano</i>	The new trend (also Enugu State slogan)
XXIV				UN20060814	The Taste of <i>Isi-Ewu</i> is in The Eating	Parody of the idiom “the proof of the pudding is in the eating”; ( <i>Isi-Ewu</i> = goat head)
XXV	<i>Hausa</i> – Igbo – Yoruba – English	1	0.8	PCD20051130	<i>Allah</i> , <i>Chineke</i> , <i>Eledunmare</i> And The Small gods In Nigeria	Reference to a divine Being
XXVI	English – <i>Hausa</i>	2	1.5	DOF20100831	The Mad Prophetess And Her <i>Almajiris</i>	Etymologically Arabic; those under religious tutelage
XXVII				PCD20081018	Nigerians Looking For <i>Amala</i> , <i>Tuwo</i> And Not Wall Street.	Pudding
XXVIII	French ONLY	4	3.1	SCO20070803	Vive La Paix En Cote D'Ivoire!	Long live peace in Cote D'Ivoire!
XXIX				SCO20071231	Bonjour 2008, Bonne et Heureux Annee!	Good day 2008, Happy and a prosperous new year!
XXX	<i>French</i> – English	3	2.3	PCD20080810	<i>Et Tu Nigeria...</i> Talking About A Revolution?	And you Nigeria ...
XXXI				SCO20080205	<i>Jardin Privé</i> (Private Garden)	Euphemism for sexual organ
XXXII	Foreignism	2	1.5	PCD20060519	INEC, 2007 Elections: <i>Nemo Dat Quod Non Habet</i>	Nobody gives what they do not have
XXXIII				PCD20101028	<i>...Sans Grantie</i> (governance Without Guarantee--our Nigeria)	Governance Without Guarantee

XXXIV	Nigerianism	21	16.2	JG20060403	<i>Nollywood: A miscellany of western and Nigerian cultures</i>	The Nigerian movie industry
XXXV				SCO20080128	That Senator Aliyu's '419' Bombshell!	Scam, fraud, hoax, deception
XXXVI	Neologisms / Coinages	11	8.5	PCD20090825	From Boko Haram To <i>Banking Haram</i>	Pun on the notorious proper noun “Boko Haram”
XXXVII				SCO20100708	Nigeria ' <i>yakubued</i> ' Again!	Satirical conversion of proper noun to a verb; disgraced
XXXVIII	Slang	3	2.3	SS20051101	The Boring 'burb and my <i>Ogbunigwe</i>	NVS euphemism for farting
XXXIX				SCO20070811	The <i>Gigolos</i> Amongst Us	Code for lazy, sexually perverted men
	Total	130	100			



### 3.2 LANGUAGE CHOICE, LINGUISTIC MARKETING AND INTERTEXTUALITY

In pursuance of the thematic concerns of this study, language choice and use online will be situated within the technological, sociocultural and political contexts that shape their occurrence and transmission (Danet & Herring, 2007). Following Androutsopoulos (2008), who advocates a discourse-centred online ethnography, we have systematically observed the discourse activities of NVS Villagers over time and also had direct contact with some when clarifications of intentions were necessary. Moreover, in the course of writing this work, it was discovered that a fusion of our conceptual paradigms, combining multimodality, intertextuality and heteroglossia, has already been proposed in Androutsopoulos (2010). This strengthens the arguments of the present study.

By linguistic marketing is meant discourse<sup>28</sup> as a vehicle for 'promotional acts' (Fairclough, 1993; e.g. the use of Nigerian indigenous languages with Nigerian Pidgin in English texts) and for 'selling' particular cultures and ideologies to multicultural and multilingual readers/audiences. One interpretation of this is in terms of asserting language rights and linguistic equality. So, for users of minority languages who engage in public sphere code switching, the goal is defined “not so much by the chances of being understood or misunderstood ... but rather by *the chances of being listened to*, believed, obeyed, even at the cost of misunderstanding” (Bourdieu, 1977:654, emphasis added). This echoes Hill and Hill's (1986) commentary on Bakhtin's (1968) account of carnival and marketplace speech. According to them, “in the heteroglossic marketplace ... common people can attack the monologic dominance of standard language” (1986: 398). They further stress that “mixing in language may carry a special resonance of resistance to official order” and state that “heteroglossia in multilingual popular usage amplifies for meaning and freedom” (1986: 398-

---

<sup>28</sup> Bourdieu (1977:651) places market values on linguistic exchanges and opines that “Discourse is a symbolic asset which can receive different values depending on the market values on which it is offered”.

399). That is, language mixture in this context is an instantiation of freedom of speech, freedom of switch and freedom to switch without meaning impairment. With the aid of intertextuality and interdiscursive techniques, writers and online interactants ensure that the switching and language alternation are meaningful to readers (except in a case where a writer deliberately writes in one indigenous language without providing any translation, serving purpose of excluding non-literate interactants in that language).

Similarly, referring to 'linguistic choices as negotiations' (Myers-Scotton, 1983, 1993) reflects an interactant's calculation of the meaning-potential and possible communication costs of that choice. According to Myers-Scotton (1993:141), this is “clearly a gamble preceded, consciously or unconsciously, by some weighting of the relative costs and rewards of making this choice” because choosing either English-only, or mixing English with Nigerian languages and Pidgin, or choosing Nigerian languages only indexes a desired Right and Obligations (RO) set among interactants in the Square. Villagers are aware that in a virtual environment with limited paralinguistic cues, linguistic symbols have “market values” (Bourdieu, 1977) and words, in particular, constitute a crucial form of “cultural capital” (Sveningsson, 2002) for relational and identity work.

Intertextuality is Bakhtinian in spirit. The framework asserts that discourse and individual texts are an intersection of multiple textual surfaces and constitute a dialogue among various texts, genres, and voices: the writer's, the character's, the readers'/audiences', and the socio-historical cultural context (Agger, 1995; Kristeva, 1969). Kristeva (1969 [1967], 1981, 1986) is credited with the coinage of the term 'intertextuality' based on Bakhtin's concept of dialogism. That every utterance in discourse is dialogical indicates *a meaning web* for “a permutation of texts, an intertextuality: in the space of a given text, several utterances, taken from other texts, intersect” (Kristeva, 1981:36). The theory of intertextuality therefore holds that every text is composed as a mosaic of references to other

texts, genres, and discourses by direct or implicit attribution of the external source(s) and voice(s) (Agger, 1995; Kristeva, 1969). Thus, it enables online interactants (writers and readers alike) to cognitively interact in the process of semantic construction and deconstruction (or simply meaning making) in the sense that “all texts, spoken and written, are constructed and have the meanings which text-users assign to them in and through their relations with other texts in some social formation” (Thibault, 1994: 1751). This goes to show that there exists *a heterogenous discursive practice of interaction and intersection* in text production, dissemination and consumption among writers, textual utterances and readers. As a matter of fact, this illustrates our conceptualisation of interdiscursivity, which is Faircloughian because his is that “[t]he concept of interdiscursivity draws attention to the potential heterogeneity of texts in terms of the diverse discourse conventions, types of discourse, which can be drawn upon in their production” (1992b: 284).

Then, as a sociocultural practice, intertextuality inserts historicity (Kristeva, 1986) into a text and “points to how texts can transform prior texts and restructure existing conventions (genres, discourses) to generate new ones” (Fairclough 1992b: 270). So, making meaning out of a text or discourse is based on a network of prior, concurrent and anticipated discursive events which translate into a dialectical relationship between language and society. The linguistic traces of intertextuality include quotation marks, implicitly invoking the voice / view of others, allusive references to other texts or persons, a stylization of the discursive manners of specific group of people or traditions, and/or a 'genre mix' (Gruber, 2000).

Linguistic pluralism on the Internet (Warschauer, 2002) and linguistic heterogeneity online (Paolillo, 1999; Siebenhaar, 2006) involve the *meaningful co-occurrence* of linguistic elements from the languages available to interactants in publicly accessible electronic discourse. Definitely such an equal-opportunity-

for-all-languages situation will give rise to online multilingualism (Danet & Herring, 2007). Linguistic heterogeneity encompasses all transference and contact phenomena in discourse such as code switching, borrowing and related concepts. Code switching (or language alternation) as a subject matter in linguistics and language studies has remained an area of active research since Blom and Gumperz's (1972) seminal publication. This is not to belittle the influence of earlier bilingualism studies (e.g. Barker, 1947; Clyne, 1967; Fishman, 1965; Haugen, 1950; Weinreich, 1953) on later code switching research. Grosjean (1982: 145) defines code switching as "the alternate use of two or more languages in the same utterance or conversation" while Milroy and Muysken (1995:7) define it as "the alternate use by bilinguals of two or more languages in the same conversation"; in contrast, Baker (2001:101) opines that it "is now the term generally used to describe any switch within the course of a single conversation, whether at word or sentence level or at the level of blocks of speech". What becomes clear from these definitions is that code switching is a feature associated with the speech or linguistic habit of bi/multilinguals; at least two linguistic systems are required for its occurrence; alternation between or among several linguistic systems is attested; it is systematically produced and yields linguistic creativity<sup>29</sup>.

Earlier prominent studies (e.g Auer 1984, 1998; Gumperz, 1982; Heller, 1988; Myers-Scotton, 1993) have extensively focused on spontaneous conversation. Research on code switching in planned discourse or written communication is a relatively rare and (in comparison to studies on spontaneous code switching)

---

<sup>29</sup> However, linguistic creativity via language alternation is not the same as a hybrid language like pidgin because the latter is a more stable linguistic system with features distinct from switched discourses (cf. Franceschini, 1998; Mühlhäusler, 1986). As Nigerian data have shown over time, Pidgin is in itself a donor language in Nigerian code switching and Nigerian Pidgin is a hybrid language. It was initially considered a nobody's but everybody's language but recent studies (eg Igboanusi 2008) have established that there are children born nowadays, as well as many young adults, who possess Nigerian Pidgin as an L1 because of its creolising status in certain parts of the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. While on the one hand, it is a pidgin to the generality of Nigerians (whether educated or non-educated), Nigerian Pidgin is now a creole as well to those L1 speakers of the language. Alongside the English language, pidgin as a linguistic system is to Anglo-West Africa what Swahili is to East Africans: a regional code for transnational commerce, communication and cosmopolitanism.

fairly, recent development (cf. Bamiro, 2006; Callahan, 2004; Hinrichs, 2006; McLellan, 2005; Montes-Alcalá, 2000, 2007; Nurmi & Pahta, 2004; Omole, 1987; Onysko, 2006; 2007; Opeibi, 2007). Code switching now involves the presence and meaningful use of elements of two or more linguistic systems in an utterance, stretch of discourse, or written communication. The expanded definition is a re-theorization of code switching which enables it to conceptually handle new trends of global and written discourses with the multimodal features of online contexts (Omoniyi, 2005; Sebba, Mahootian & Jonsson, 2011). This study argues that language mixture and related phenomena are purposefully and creatively employed in Nigerian virtual discourse. Alongside intrasentential and intersentential switching, we introduce a new explanatory category called 'interdiscursive language switching' to account for the vertical alternation in articles' headlines and body with interactants' responses, evident in our corpus.

Language switching as an unmarked feature of textual multilingualism serves as an *interventionist discourse technique* whereby non-indigenous and indigenous ideologies are *integrated* in hybridised discourse. This interventionist nature of language alternation to Nigerian bi/multilinguals is what Turner (1967) & Hess (1996) call *liminality* – “the state of creative in-betweenness”, whereas Kamwangamalu (1998) refers to it as a *code-in-between* which is employed by bi/multilingual South Africans in the construction and expression of their ideologies and linguistic identities by a fusion of Western and local African concepts. Bhatt (2008: 182), however, describes this intervention as a *third space* which “gives rise to possibilities for new meanings and, at the same time, presents a mechanism to negotiate and navigate between a global identity and local practices”. This technique therefore facilitates the transnational and transcultural flow, flux and fusion of concepts and codes resulting in linguistic creativity (Androutsopoulos & Scholz, 2002; Canagarajah, 2006; Pennycook, 2007).

Language alternation occurs in both formal and informal discourse settings for bi/multilinguals (Kamwangamalu, 1992; Omoniyi, 2005) but it is more consciously done in CMC. It is the case that words in a public sphere are either said to be heard or written to be read in order to forge a cognitive or intellectual interaction between the speaker/writer and the listener/reader. Online forum messages are thus 'dialogical' (Bakhtin, 1981) because publicly accessible digital write-ups are primarily composed to be read and, if possible, evoke responses from readers or anticipated audiences. This is non-trivially implicit in digital messages because by the act of reading there is a “conversational interaction” between the author and the reader, and *a negotiation of meaning* (in terms of what the former intends to be communicated and what the latter eventually interprets the messages to mean). Extrapolating from current metaphorical usage, one could say (with Bauman, 2001: 60, 61) that “In the marketplace, the verbal creation and enhancement of value is in the service of value of a particular kind, namely commodity value .... designed to attract the attention of potential customers, inform them about the commodities for sale, and induce them to buy”. Thus, apart from indexing other texts, intertextuality is a way of indexing contexts of use and categories of users (Bauman, 2001:76), as well as of constructing identities. In light of the foregoing, NVS interactants are constantly marketing one linguistic practice or another as well as sociocultural semiotic artifacts with the overarching aim of attracting the attention of potential readers and interactants.

### **3.2.1 Vertical Interdiscursivity: “Top – Down” Linguistic Heterogeneity**

Articles written for or posted to NVS are opinionated and similar to traditional newspapers' editorials and op-ed articles but they are stylistically different in that each writer frames their headline and story without the usual editing for in-house style and ideological conformity. Opinions are ideologically framed 'evaluative beliefs' (van Dijk, 1998) and analyses of events and issues. They are usually composed as propositions, expositions and conclusions, structured in accordance

with the schema:

- (i) Headline
- (ii) Story
- (iii) Conclusion
- (iv) and a semiotic elicitation of readers' response<sup>30</sup>.

Headlines are thoughtfully crafted because they are the gateways to the treasures of a piece of writing. So, the choice of language and expressions is intentional and aimed at specific pragmatic effects on readers and online interactants. That is, they are attention-getters designed to create instant impact on readers by inducing them to read the body of the story (Bell, 1991; Nir, 1993; Taiwo, 2004), and for interactional exchanges to take place at the cognitive and communicative levels. Headlines “define the overall coherence or semantic unity of discourse, and also what information readers memorize best” (van Dijk, 1988: 248) and recall most. They are at the centre of story theme and content negotiation. As Dor (2003:696) puts it, they are “relevance optimizers: They are designed to optimize the relevance of their stories for their readers”. Therefore, they persuasively 'tell and sell' (Ludwig and Gilmore, 2005:107) stories to readers who might not want to read the body of articles.

Our corpus of 130 NVS articles are vertically interdiscursive by structural means of the 'articles-comments' format of the online forum. Stylistically, the NVS headlines exhibit 'dialogism': intertextuality, linguistic heterogeneity and hybridity (Bakhtin, 1981). The variation of language patterns in the headlines alone as represented in Table 6 reflects the heterogeneity of the linguistic contents. However, where no language mixture or code switching is evident in the headlines and these appear to be monolingual constructs, via the top-down interdiscursive paradigm, it is the case that the body and interactants' comments

---

<sup>30</sup> This is a recent trend in new media and online newspapers, and a feature of Web 2.0

below the articles contain switching from one language to the other or between one language and another. This kind of code switching is not possible in spontaneous spoken discourse because there is no structural provision for such an interdiscursive graphological template and interface.

For instance, headlines I, XIII, XIX, and XXVIII in Table 6 use monolingual Nigerian Pidgin, Yoruba, Igbo and French respectively but the stories and interactants' comments are predominantly in English mixed with Nigerian Pidgin and indigenous languages. This is a display of top-down interdiscursivity with traces of intertextuality. Furthermore, the headline in (I) “Yanga Dey Sleep” is an elliptical sentence that requires us to look forward to the conclusion of the article in order to get the context and fully decode the expression's meaning: “... how could it when *Yanga dey sleep trouble come wake am?*” However, to any Nigerian reader familiar with the Nigerian Pidgin idiom popularised by Fela Anikulapo-Kuti in his satirical song “Trouble Sleep Yanga Wake Am,” the meaning web is cognitively and instantly intertextual (Olatunji, 2007).

Headline XIII “Oju L'Oro Wa!” is harder to process especially for non-Yoruba literate interactants. But the author mitigates this by using the first paragraph of the story to provide the background information:

*Oju l'oro wa!* The face is the abode of discourse. When and how did the Yoruba genius come up with this adage? Often, the African genius packs ancestral wisdoms and an entire world into just one saying. If you are the type that constantly tries to listen to the wisdoms (sic) of your cultural matrix, you encounter them constantly in glittering nuggets as the business we call living takes you around on its quotidian grind.

Thereafter he goes on with his expositions and satire on the invasion of digital technology (especially Facebook) into social interaction. By this interdiscursive technique, readers eventually understand the humour in the headline as a satire on globalisation and interpersonal relations. The writer stylistically connects the



headline with the story and places the discourse in its sociocultural framework by references to the adage and globalisation. Readers comment on how the intertextual connections engender their assimilation and understanding of the discourse. The article itself then serves another intertextual function for the reader, as seen below:

Re: Oju L`Oro Wa! (Apr 23, 2009 11:57 AM)<sup>31</sup>

Your article brings to my recollection something I read a really long time ago about the difference between a GENUINE African perspective and a Western one; Africans are about the people and the land; my foggy recollection is that Westerners are more about products than about people.

Unfortunately, as we observe, beyond a certain extent, products - whether consumer or technology etc. - no longer seem to meet the very human needs to interact.

I appreciate the pithiness of your thoughts.

Because the subject matter is one that many NVS Villagers can identify with, we can see how individual experiences are triggered and recollected with an evidence of intellectual interaction between the writer and the readers, and among reading interactants.

Also consider the comment and switching by another interactant:

Re: Oju L`Oro Wa! (Apr 23, 2009 06:45 AM)<sup>32</sup>

I love the way many African cultures make out time to listen to the elderly rehash their stories for the umpteenth time. This takes the edge off their loneliness (sic) and makes our senior citizens feel cherished. Unfortunately, as we get more westernized and get busier, we cannot spend quality time with the grandparents like we should. *O ma se o*, what a pity.

The last sentence involves a code-switched Yoruba-English text which is another manifestation of interdiscursive switching. So, as far as monolingual headlines in

---

<sup>31</sup> <http://nigeriavillagesquare.com/forum/take-articles-comments/31480-oju-l-oro-wa.html#post349336>

<sup>32</sup> <http://nigeriavillagesquare.com/forum/take-articles-comments/31480-oju-l-oro-wa.html#post349289>

our corpus are concerned, the write-ups contain vertically interdiscursive code switching as well as readers' comments.

The body of the article with headline (XXI) contains several mixtures of Igbo content words and phrases. This is to be expected because the title is first a switched Igbo-English sentence. The topic of discussion being one of the cultural practices of Igbo people is enough reason for insertional code switching. Excerpt of the article content is produced as example 2. Language mixture is a recurrent feature of the story.

(2) To the uninitiated, *Ndigbo* are a show-off race, what with their big titles and ceremonies but such allegations are far from the truth. *Ndigbo* are proud and traditional people and so are other races, but in the case of *Ndigbo* not even the 'civilisation' brought by the Whiteman as depicted in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*<sup>33</sup> could rob them of their *Omenani*. Agreed the Whiteman may have desecrated the land and committed *alu* upon *alu* in *Alaigbo* but *Ndigbo* as a people have always produced several Okonkwos who have ensured that the flames enkindled (sic) by their ancestors never burn out.

[*Alu* – Sacrilege or abomination ; *Alaigbo* – Igbo land ; *Ndigbo* - Igbo people ; *Omenani* – Culture or tradition]

(English *Igbo*, UN2007/05/14)

A reader's response below indicates that the topic of the article motivates insertional switching for Igbo-literate interactants:

Re: Nke Onye Chiri Ya Zaa! (On Igbo Titles) (May 15, 2007 01:27 AM)<sup>34</sup>

Ezeudo, the son of Nka Ona Adi, ( The right place it should be)

I wish that Nigeria had a lingua franca that will accommodate the beauty of what you have written or what you have just scratched at because it cannot be fully expatiated here. My mother,s name is Ugogbe Umu Nwanyi longer and complete form of Ugogbe (the mirror of women). Once you call this

<sup>33</sup> This is the title of a book and not an instance of language mixture. We retain the italics in this example just as the author does.

<sup>34</sup> <http://nigeriavillagesquare.com/forum/take-articles-comments/9647-nke-onye-chiri-ya-zaa-igbo-titles.html#post110749>

name in a gathering, she will respond immediately as if an ant bit her in a sensitive place. My late father inherited their family's title Ugonwanne ie the Eagle of brotherhood by which I addressed him until he died. ...

Indeed Igbos prefer their title or pet names rather than their baptismal names and watch how they answer as if they have been stung by a bee to see the impact of these names on them.

The few examples discussed so far are sufficient to show that intertextuality along with interdiscursivity is a useful explanatory device.

### **3.3 THE PRAGMATICS OF INTERDISCURSIVE LANGUAGE CHOICE**

As already stated, there is a meaningful co-occurrence of elements from different languages or linguistic systems in interdiscursive language choice. We illustrate in this section a few pragmatic effects of interdiscursivity. These include attention-getting, allusive textuality (direct and indirect quotes), amusing phaticity (humour, jokes, playfulness), anticipated interactivity, affective expressivity and audience affiliation (or alienation) among others.

#### **3.3.1 Attention-getting**

Attention-getting devices in print discourse arouse readers' interest in the products or services being advertised (Bhatia, 1987; Martin, 2002; Piller, 2003). The intended effect this strategy hopes to achieve in online forums is getting readers interested in the article. On the NVS home page multiple headlines are usually splashed all over the place each competing for interactants' attention. Some writers are aware of this fact and put in a lot of planning into the title of their write-up. A headline that attracts readers' attention must do something unconventional and preferably be as catchy as possible, sometimes even 'controversial'.

Example 3, by its choice of words and numbers, is self-attracting. '419' in Nigerian discourse statutorily refers to a section of the Nigerian penal code that

specifies the consequences of indulging in nefarious economic activities or any form of advance fee fraud. So, '419' is not a term any Nigerian wants to be associated with, let alone support the activities it denotes (Blommaert and Omoniyi, 2006; Chilwa, 2009; Ofulue, 2010).

(3) In Defence of '419' (SCO2007/01/09)

To defend a thing presupposes that it is morally and legally permissible and that the defender subscribes to its use or functionality. But that is not the case with the authorship of (3). The headline is an effective attention-getter as readers and interactants are curious to see how a responsible person would condone or openly support '419' acts. Intertextuality is at operation here, because the headline immediately triggers the negative historical connotations of '419' and how this tarnishes the image of honest Nigerians, especially of those in the diaspora.

On reading the article, it turns out that the writer has used the headline to get readers to intellectually engage him on some of the socially unjust practices in modern society which are not Nigeria-specific. By highlighting societal problems, the headline is interdiscursive and the reference in the body to various inhumane practices shows the force of the intertextuality within it.

The reader's response below reveals the dialogical interaction between writers and respondents in this medium.

Re: In Defence of `419` (Jan 15, 2007 06:51 AM)<sup>35</sup>

---

>Sunny Chris Okenwa>

'419' could be found in the Holy Bible thousands of years ago as an account was rendered therein about how a certain supplanter named Esau 'duped' his dying father and brother to obtain a crucial paternal blessings destined for

---

<sup>35</sup> <http://nigeriavillagesquare.com/forum/take-articles-comments/7054-defence-419-a.html#post84389>

Jacob.

---

Correction!!! It was Jacob that trick (419) their dad to get the blessing intended for Esau his brother. Not the other way as you put it. Gen. 27 vs 21-24.

Let me first say that I do not condone 419. But y'all, The Americans and the British that are falling for it were scammers themselves (sic). What we have here is scammers getting scammed. It's a game/match, like football game or a soccer match; there will be a winner and a loser. In this case, their Nigerian counterpart won the game. Instead of the American and the British 419ers to lose graciously; no they screamed for foul play.

...

Intelligently we all know what could have happen. White people think we are stupid.

I bet you when they first read the e-mail, the first thing they will say to themselves will

be: "I told you, them \*\*\*\*\* stupid"

We all receive this type of mail all the time. Don't we? Sometimes, If am in a play mood

I reply them. And write something like:

"Guys, look, I'm from Idi-oro, Mushin, Olosha, (Tri city)The capital of the word, The grand city for the 419ers. Try next door. Good luck"

The above interactant initially corrects the premise of the author's reference to a biblical story and shares his personal story to support the article's thesis. However, let us take note of the productivity of '419' as the root of the word '419ers'. Is this creativity not an instantiation of intertextuality too? Sure it is.

(4)                      Officer, Arrest Dat Man!                      (PA2009/01/18)

This headline is a constellation of colloquialism and Nigerianism for getting readers' attention. First, 'officer' is a referring expression to the Nigerian police force. During domestic or communal disputes, the police are called to intervene and when a policeman or woman arrives, the default request is as the headline phrases it: 'Officer, this is the culprit, arrest him or her'. Secondly, the expression can be an open display of power. It is usually influential people with high

economic and social standing who are prone to call on the police at the least provocation, for the police to do their bidding even if they are the ones who are sometimes at fault. One can easily sense the authoritative tone in commanding the 'officer' to “arrest dat man”. Arrogantly, these people can use their economic power to influence the verdict of police investigation. Thirdly, and graphemically, 'Dat' indexes written Nigerian Pidgin.

Therefore, the headline is a mosaic of sociocultural practices among Nigerians, and the content and context of the article exploit these manifestations of intertextuality for satire. As Fairclough (1992a: 194) opines, this kind of analysis “shows how texts selectively draw upon *orders of discourse*” (italics in original).

Re: Officer, Arrest Dat Man! (Jan 19, 2009 11:20 AM)<sup>36</sup>

This Pius sef!

Who do you think you are? Stop making fun of what makes life wonderful in Nigeria. If not that you are outside my jurisdiction, I would have ordered your immediate arrest. Wetin? I will even arrest your wife.

You think we have never been abroad before? We have been everywhere. We know how it is done abroad. We like it better here. And that is why we are not soaking the cold with you over there in Canada.

Here, as Tony Montana said, the world is ours. So leave that for us, will you? Mind your own business in Ottawa or wherever it is you are.

If not, our boys shall meet you at the airport when next you come home. Yes. If you like, sneak in through the border again. We shall get hold of you and show you pepper.

Then you will really have something to write about. Bad sons.

The above interactant directly engages the writer in the first line of the response and conversationally balances the act with anecdotes, Nigerian Pidgin and other colloquial Nigerianisms.

---

<sup>36</sup> <http://nigeriavillagesquare.com/forum/take-articles-comments/28719-officer-arrest-dat-man.html#post314822>

(5) Nigeria 'Yakubued' Again! (SCO2010/07/08)

The headline employs the graphological device of exclamation to attract readers and interactants. Apart from this, there is lexical creativity by the grammatical conversion of a proper noun 'Yakubu' to a verb 'Yakubued'. The conversion is satirical and at the same time intertextual. It relays Kristeva's (1986: 39) comment about the “insertion of history (society) into a text and of this text into history”. Not only does the author trace the historical trajectory of the verb 'Yakubued', in the context of the 2010 football World Cup competition in South Africa, another bearer of the name 'Yakubu' is intertextually connected to the first 'Yakubu (Gowon)' because the actions of both of them connote disgrace to Nigeria.

The author surmises<sup>37</sup>:

Nigeria was first *Yakubued* politically when the then Head of State Gen. Yakubu Gowon out of youthful exuberance declared in early 70's to the whole world that Nigeria had money but no idea on how to use it! Nigeria was almost *Yakubued* soccer-wise in the qualifying series of the world cup when a miracle was needed for us to be able to stop Tunisia from taking our slot. It took the desperate defeat of Kenya on home-soil and the beating of Tunisia by Mozambique in Maputo before Nigeria could book a place in the world cup finals in South Africa.

Nigeria was *Yakubued* again when a hired plane that would have flown the squad to South Africa days before the opening ceremony suddenly developed 'technical problems' in London. It took the intervention of the Sports Minister and the hiring of another airline in Nigeria before the boys could be flown to SA. Another *Yakubu* syndrome of shame was introduced when the low-rated hotel booked was rejected at the last minute on arrival. Another better hotel accommodation was secured but not after the image of Nigeria was *Yakubued*.

Yakubu Aiyegbeni is a disgrace to his fatherland but we must not crucify him! We have a lot of hits and misses in the world cup like Asamoah Gyan missing a last-second penalty that would have catapulted Ghana (and Africa in general) to the Semi-finals of the world cup. Like the Ghanaian Captain John Mensah playing his penalty kick as if nothing was at stake! Yakubu is a

<sup>37</sup> <http://www.nigeriavillagesquare.com/articles/sunny-chris-okenwa/nigeria-yakubued-again.html>

product of Nigeria so Nigeria is a *Yakubuland*, a blessed land flowing with oil and gas, a potential great nation where poverty and misery have elected home.

Nigeria is being *Yakubued* on a daily basis by politicians of fortune whose greed remains incomparable. The *Yakubuing* will never stop until we put a definite stop to it through an electoral revolution that could happen next year with Prof. Attahiru Jega as the INEC boss.

The body of the article presents new kinds of word formation. There is another class changing conversion to adjectivisation as in '*Yakubu* syndrome' and another class maintaining one '*Yakubuland*'. Linking the play on the word '*Yakubu*' to the plight of the Nigerian masses, the author dialectically “mediates the connection between language and social context, and facilitates more satisfactory bridging of the gap between texts and contexts” (Fairclough, 1992a: 195). 'Again' in the headline connects with '*Yakubuing*' to indicate the continuous hardships being borne by Nigerians.

### 3.3.2 Allusive textuality

Allusion is at the core of intertextuality. It is one of the means to link the heterogeneity of texts to the theory of intertextuality (Fairclough, 1992b). Suffice it to say, nonetheless, that it is the mapping mechanism or the bridge between current and previous texts, current and previous themes or topics, current and previous discursive practices, and current and previous societal occurrences. Examples (6) – (8) contextualize the allusive textuality in each of the pieces.

(6) Nigeria-Must-Go (UN2007/07/05)

The author employs the dialogic mode to convey his message using two characters<sup>38</sup>:

“Anyway, I have concluded plans to join my cousins in Ghana”

---

<sup>38</sup> <http://www.nigeriavillagesquare.com/articles/uche-nworah/nigeria-must-go.html>



“Ghana? Wetin dey happen for Ghana?”

“I am relocating finally. My cousins have asked me to join them as soon as possible before it is too late. Very soon the mad rush will begin”

...

“You may need it during Nigeria – Must – Go”.

“Nigeria-Must-Go, which one is that again?”

“Oh, you think that Ghanaians have forgotten the way Nigerians drove them away in the 80s during our economic boom?”

“So are you saying that they would chase us away in retaliation?”

“What would you do if you were in their shoes? You know that since the incident of the eighties, there hasn’t been much love lost between Nigerians and Ghanaians”

“Ghana-Must-Go” is a Nigerian coinage for a woven plastic bag used by Ghanaians to flee Nigeria in 1983 when they were expelled in the thousands. Background knowledge of this term therefore reinforces the clarity of the allusions to this bag and the historical incident.

(7) *Anambra Oni Baje* (UN2009/05/27)

The introductory paragraph of the article, in the writer's own words, is below:

I owe the title of this piece to Okechukwu Obinwa (Ayola), a classmate at C.I.C Enugu who responded to an entry I made in my Facebook status with the ‘Anambra *Oni Baje*’ expression. I had jokingly suggested that since Governor Raji Fashola of Lagos state was kind enough to accommodate our brother Ben Akabueze in his cabinet as a commissioner, Anambra people should reciprocate such kindness and ‘borrow’ Governor Fashola as governor in 2010. Though this was meant as a joke, however, the seriousness of the suggestion and the desperateness of the Anambra situation were not lost on many who commented in the Facebook thread. One commentator, Dafe Ivwurie I think it was, wondered if Lagosians will be willing to ‘release’ their hardworking governor for such a rescue mission and went ahead to request that Fashola come to Delta, his home state instead.

“Èkó ò ní bàjé” (meaning 'good wishes for Lagos State') is the new slogan for Lagos under the current administration. Appropriating the term to Anambra, the author wishes for his state the same dividends of democracy and effective governance as are being witnessed in Lagos.

(8) For Sure Ni... (JG2006/05/13)

The influence of Sir Shina Peters' song on the author's choice of headline and contents is acknowledged in the concluding paragraph of the article as follows:

On this note, I take my exit. I'm sure you remember Sir Shina Peters' lyrics: “for sure ni, young shall grow.” I'm still growing, still learning, still developing even. My list will certainly be revised before I organize my mid-life crisis party.

What do you know for sure?

*For sure ni* is an insertional switching from English to Yoruba 'ni', meaning: it's certain.

### 3.3.3 Anticipated interactivity

The very essence of dialogism is the evidence of interactive exchanges between/among interactants. Vertical interdiscursive code switching is the default feature of all the texts in our NVS corpus; Argenter's (2001:388) observation that “code-switching is a demonstration of intertextuality, polyphony, and dialogism” holds for this analysis. Whereas examples (9) and (10) use interrogative headlines with an explicit punctuation device as a cue for dialogue (Mardh, 1980), the imperative in (11) is a strategy for anticipated interactivity because the subject matter is dating and romance. In each of (9) to (11), there are textual traces of dialogical interactions between the authors and the reading online interactants which confirm Kamberelis and Scott's (1992:363) argument that “all writers and all texts anticipate responses”.

(9) Una No Dey Go Christmas?

(UN2006/12/20)

The headline is in Nigerian Pidgin (translated as 'Aren't you [guys] travelling home for Christmas?') while the body of the article is written in English. A reader's response to the article is below:

Re: .Una No Dey Go Christmas?<sup>39</sup>

oboy i call person for that side , the kin thief wey dey road now no be small thing , them say even the ones wey don retire them dey road. small , small boys wey dey ginger for next year election wey politicians done buy gun give everybody dey road. the two worst places are benin-onitsha then onitsha-owerri road.

its worse at night

(10) Et Tu Nigeria...Talking About A Revolution? (PCD2008/08/10)

The author here semiotically references to the historical French revolution but a reader's response dilutes the author's call:

Re: Et Tu Nigeria...Talking About A Revolution?<sup>40</sup>

People wen dey hide under bed at the sound of a gun shot accidentally discharged in the air dey talk of revolution? Please this revolution can only end in the "talking" phase.

Gba be!

In-nna-rest-ing!!!!

Wonders!

Translation: Those who are afraid of a gun accidentally shot into the air are here

---

<sup>39</sup> <http://nigeriavillagesquare.com/forum/take-articles-comments/6650-una-no-dey-go-christmas.html#post73134>

<sup>40</sup> <http://nigeriavillagesquare.com/forum/take-articles-comments/22079-et-tu-nigeria-talking-about-revolution.html#post254299>

talking about revolution?

... Accept it!

Interesting !!!

(11) Date Me Jeje, Date Me Tender (VE2008/12/21)

'Jeje' is the Yoruba word for tenderness.

But who will be brave enough to not only date me jeje, but also date me tender? That is the trillion-dollar question. This cannot be the conclusion of this story. I must come back and write about how I was jejely and tenderly dated. All I need to figure out now is the title of the upcoming write-up. Allow me, however, to end this one like a Nigerian movie: To God Be The Glory. Watch Out For Part II.

The dialogical response from a Villager is as follows:

Re: Date Me Jeje, Date Me Tender<sup>41</sup>

“Allow me, however, to end this one like a Nigerian movie: To God Be The Glory. Watch Out For Part II.  
Hahaha I really like the ending of your write up.”

Vera I hear you loud & clear. It is had (sic?) to find a correct date. These days most guys are lazy & they just want to go to last base kia kia. I haven't got the strenght for online dating yet. I keep hearing positive things sha. Two gfs of mine married their online bobos (9ja online dating website sef).

I am anxiously waiting for part 2. Maybe some of these single & searching NVS guys would take you out on that special date of yours [love emoticon].

### 3.3.4 Amusing phaticity

Amusing phaticity such as humour and jokes incorporates playfulness into

---

<sup>41</sup> <http://nigeriavillagesquare.com/forum/take-articles-comments/27941-date-me-jeje-date-me-tender.html#post303818>

discourse (Lieberman, 1977). Interestingly, Danet's (2001:10) *Cyberpl@y* illustrates how virtual communication enunciates the “overt manifestations of more or less spontaneous playfulness on the computer screen”. Thus, example (12) is a word play on the name of the Nigerian President, Goodluck Jonathan. Similarly, example (13) is a neologism crafted by playing on the surname of the first female Speaker of the Nigerian House of Representatives, Etteh, which triggers off the allusion to 'entertainment'. Data (14) is a play on the name of the notorious sect 'Boko Haram' to frame the financially unpleasant operations of some Nigerian banks. Amusing phaticity is obviously entertaining to readers and discourse interactants.

- |      |                                  |                 |
|------|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| (12) | Jonathan, ...luck Dey Finish O!  | (PCD2010/05/31) |
| (13) | Etteh-tainment                   | (RA2007/11/02)  |
| (14) | From Boko Haram To Banking Haram | (PCD2009/08/25) |

### 3.3.5 Affective expressivity

Emotional states and feelings are evident in affective expressivity. The conscious graphological cue is the exclamation mark. Like headlines of tabloids, examples (15) - (17) “very efficiently trigger frames and belief systems in the reader's mind; they evoke images and scenarios in the reader” (Dor, 2003: 716). But (17) additionally enjoins readers to empathize with and warn the husband of the writer (whom she refers to by the pseudonym 'Boo' ).

Nevertheless, on the basis of the affective nature of this class of headlines, the conceptual metaphor (Ifukor, 2005; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) HEADLINES ARE CRYING BABIES would fit their characterisation. That is, just as babies cry for the attention of their parents, so are the headlines composed and positioned to attract readers' attention. On the other hand, babies by their act of crying express emotions. Therefore, these headlines like babies are emotive

- |      |                            |                 |
|------|----------------------------|-----------------|
| (15) | Una well done o!           | (JG2006/08/31)  |
| (16) | “Blood Of Jesus!, Coup Ke” | (RoA2009/03/13) |
| (17) | Ekilo Fun Boo O, Hmm!!!    | (SS2006/07/01)  |

### 3.3.6 Audience affiliation (or alienation)

The first person plural pronouns of solidarity 'we' and 'our' (Brown & Gilman, 1960; Pennycook, 1994) in (18) - (20) enable the writers to identify with the targeted reading audience. First, these pronouns encode the Nigerianness of the authors and make them to be portrayed as being equally affected by the socio-political problems they write about. Secondly, these pronouns are national identity discursive constructs in an inclusive sense [+ writer, + interactant, + Nigerian].

- |      |                                                                                                          |                 |
|------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| (18) | Wayo-Wayo Government We Dey: A Huge Scam Called Privatization, Selling Nigeria Gradually (PCD2006/02/17) |                 |
| (19) | Nigerians, we are a disappointment; yes we are, ho-ha!                                                   | ( CG2006/08/15) |
| (20) | Our Educational System: A Case Of 'Yeperipa'                                                             | (PCD2007/07/17) |

However, to those Nigerians who are not literate in an indigenous language a writer chooses (i.e. (17) for instance), the choice alienates them.

### 3.4 Conclusion

The two hypotheses set forth in this chapter have shown to be validated. Using the heterogeneity of headlines as barometer for instance, Nigerian Pidgin contributes 29 % of the lexical items, Yoruba and colloquial Nigerianisms equally constitute 26% each of the wordings, Igbo is 8 %, French is 5 % and Hausa is 2 %. Even though the NVS corpus is a small one, the statistical interpretation given above is plausible and reflects what holds in offline conversation among literate Nigerians.

Apart from the headlines, textual interactions between article writers and readers' responses validate our first hypothesis: that English is the default language of inter-ethnic communication among Nigerian bi/multilinguals. However, whereas Nigerian Pidgin has more speakers in offline conversations, literacy and ability to write it make it to be lesser in ranking to English in informal online discourse. Colloquial Nigerianisms compete with Yoruba for the third preference. This is not surprising because there are more Nigerians who can read and write Yoruba than they can any other indigenous language. So, English dominates the Nigerian virtual linguistic landscape, but the preference for Nigerian Pidgin by netizens as proposed in the hierarchy is because it is ethnically neutral and the best code for discursively constructing Nigerian net nationalism. The use of other Nigerian languages is promotional and for *existential negotiation*: here, French appears to be competing with indigenous languages in terms of stylistic uses online.

It has been argued in the article that the use of Nigerian Pidgin and indigenous languages in informal online discourse results in language mixture and this is an instantiation of freedom of speech, freedom of switch and freedom to switch. The underlying pragmatic motivation for top-down language mixture and alternation in Nigerian virtual discourse is attention-getting with the aim of inducing an interdiscursive writer-reader cognitive as well as communicative interactions. Other pragmatic functions of code switching discussed in the present study include allusive textuality, amusing phaticity, anticipated interactivity, affective expressivity and audience affiliation (or alienation) among others.

We conclude that intertextuality is an explanatory technique for language choice in the virtual sphere of multilingual interactants whose official language is English; as Argenter (2001) rightly said, code switching is indeed a demonstration of intertextuality. Particularly, top-down interdiscursive switching

(a previously unexplored phenomenon in digital/written code switching) is now inevitable in Nigerian CMC, and we hold the view that this linguistic technique constitutes a useful and productive paradigm for CMC research on vertical language mixture and alternation. With linguistic choices as negotiations in the Nigerian virtual sphere, intertextuality with vertical interdiscursive code switching may make *good things dey happen*.



## CHAPTER 4

### GRAPHEMIC REPRESENTATIONS OF PHONOLOGICAL CROSSING: MARKING AND MOCKING REGIONAL ACCENTS

[T]he shifts of speech towards writing may have had their heyday; *contemporary cultural values place a high valuation on informality*, and the predominant shift is towards speech-like forms in writing.  
Fairclough (1992:204, italics added).

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

Fairclough's assertion above foregrounds the stance of this chapter especially as regards informality and the penchant for speech-like forms in digital writing by young people and technologically-savvy adults. A recent Pew survey<sup>42</sup>, for instance, shows that texting is now the preferred means of communication by American youths while this practice is also gaining a wider acceptance by American adults<sup>43</sup>. Texting, twittering, blogging, instant messaging and facebooking tend to provide the needed avenues for informality in textual interactions. In the Nigerian context, informal electronic discourse permits netizens to graphemically index the Hausaness, Igboness and Yorubaness<sup>44</sup> of Nigerians in a variety of ways mostly lexically, phonologically and interactionally.

Nonetheless, informal Internet discourse provides the resources for visualizing regional accents of Nigerian English (NigE) and playfully simulating some phonological features of face-to-face communicative behaviours of Nigerians. As Sebba (2007a : 6) rightly points out, the visible representation of language such

---

<sup>42</sup> Pew Internet & American Life Project, April 20, 2010 <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/1572/teens-cell-phones-text-messages>

<sup>43</sup> Pew Internet & American Life Project, September 2, 2010 <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/1716/adults-cell-phones-text-messages>

<sup>44</sup> For practical and stylistic reasons we are focusing on data on the three largest ethnic groups unless otherwise stated.

as in CMC is “where issues of language as a formal object and of language as a social and cultural phenomenon intersect. It touches on matters of social identity, national identity, cultural politics, representation and voice. It foregrounds familiar linguistic issues of dialect and standard, of 'norm' and 'variation'. It affects, and is affected by, technology and economics”.

#### **4.2 LANGUAGE CROSSING AS THE DISCURSIVE REPRESENTATION OF ETHNICITY**

In CMC, the discursive representation and construction of ethnicity can be regarded as language crossing (Rampton, 1995, 1999) or the stylization of regional particularities in informal Internet discussions. Inspired by Roget Hewitt's ethnographic studies in the 1980s and Paul Gilroy's (1987) sociological study *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack*, Ben Rampton's seminal publication defines crossing as 'the use of language varieties associated with social or ethnic groups that the speaker does not normally “belong” to' (1995:14). In a recent revision, the definition retains the initial sense of the term as Rampton & Charalambous (2010) state that it is “the use of a language variety that feels anomalously 'other' for the participants in an activity, involving movement across quite sharply sensed social or ethnic boundaries”. It is a discourse strategy through which ethnic affiliation or disaffiliation is constructed and contested usually by people who are non-members of a particular ethnic group.

Crossing, like code switching, is a feature of bi/multilingual discourse which foregrounds “the socio-symbolic connotations/indexical values of particular linguistic forms” (Rampton & Charalambous, 2010). Also like code switching that is used for displaying in-group / out-group relations, crossing is used for negotiating ethnic affiliation or alienation. However, it can be differentiated from code switching in several ways. First, crossing is essentially an out-group

phenomenon (Kamwangamalu, 2001; Rajadurai, 2007) whereas most uses of code switching are for in-group solidarity. Second, on purpose, crossing can be an act of mocking and stereotyping other ethnic groups (Bucholtz, 1999; Hill, 1995; Rampton, 1995; Ronkin & Karn, 1999) whereas code switching is a natural mode of discourse for most bi/multilinguals. Third, crossing suggests a subtle contest over linguistic rights and boundaries because a discourse participant may be thought of as not normally “belonging” to (Rampton, 1995) but that is not usually the case with code switching.

Following Quist & Jørgensen (2007) and Rajadurai (2007), we approach language crossing in relation to ethnic identity construction emergent in linguistic interactions. Crossing being a complex and multifaceted socio-pragmatic phenomenon can involve the marking and mocking of accents of varieties of Englishes (Cutler, 1999; Rampton, 1995; Ronkin & Helen, 1999; Johnstone, 1999; Johnstone, Andrus & Danielson, 2006). This shows that phonology, in particular, is an active site for the graphemic representation and construction of identity (Coupland, 2007; Rajadurai, 2007; Vandekerckhove & Nobels, 2010).

Crossing as an 'act of identity' (Le Page & Tabouret-Leller, 1985) is linked to styling or stylization because here “speakers shift into varieties or exaggerated styles that are seen as lying beyond their normal range” (Rampton & Charalambous, 2010) and “repeated *performances* of a way of speaking may lead to increasing stylization” (Johnstone, 1999:514, italics added). For instance, while elaborating on Southern-sounding speech, Johnstone (1999) notes that 'Southern drawl' indicates diphthongization or 'multiphthongization' of vowels. Similarly, Johnstone, Andrus & Danielson (2006) report that /aw/ monophthongization in Pittsburghese indexes speakers' region while Coupland (2001) uses data from a radio talk for the stylization of the phonological features of Welshness.

As can be clearly inferred from the observations above, region has always played a central role in linguistic variation in the contemporary world as sociolinguistics has treated region as a basic explanatory variable (Johnstone, 1999; Johnstone, Andrus & Danielson, 2006) and phonological parameters are used as indicators of regional identity marking. Historically too, accents have been used for regional or ethnic stratification. For instance, in the Holy Bible (Judges Chapter 12 verses 5 and 6)<sup>45</sup>, there is an account of one sound segment being used for identity marking in finding out whether an individual was a Gileadite or an Ephraimite. Inability to utter the palato-alveolar fricative /ʃ/ in the word “shibboleth” betrayed the ethnic affiliation of the experimental individual as being truly an Ephraimite.

Sometimes, it may not be clear cut deciphering whether stylized shibboleths are instantiations of parody or non-parodistic appropriation. In some cases, the mockery is clear and straightforward while in others, it is much more a matter of subjective interpretation. In CMD, phonological crossing is attested (Androutsopoulos & Ziegler, 2004; Sebba, 2007b; Siebenhaar, 2006; Squires, 2010). A summary of studies on code switching and stylization in CMC is provided in Androutsopoulos (forthcoming / 2011) while Squires (2010) has been able to tie phonological crossing to Internet enregisterment<sup>46</sup>.

---

<sup>45</sup> **Verse 5.** And the Gileadites took the passages of Jordan before the Ephraimites: and it was so, that when those Ephraimites which were escaped said, Let me go over; that the men of Gilead said unto him, Art thou an Ephraimite? If he said, Nay;

**Verse 6.** Then said they unto him, Say now **Shibboleth**: and he said **Sibboleth**: for he could not frame to pronounce it right. Then they took him, and slew him at the passages of Jordan: and there fell at that time of the Ephraimites forty and two thousand.

<sup>46</sup> ENREGISTERMENT refers to how “a linguistic repertoire becomes differentiable within a language as a socially recognized register of forms” (Agha, 2003:231) and thus it can be used to figure out regional influences or characteristics.

### 4.3 PHONOLOGICAL FEATURES OF REGIONAL NIGERIAN ENGLISH ACCENTS

It is the phonological level as a linguistic system which more distinctively marks off the uniqueness of and variation in Nigerian English (Adetugbo, 1977; Bamgbose, 1971; Igboanusi, 2003; Jibril, 1979; Simo Bobda, 2007). Conceptually and theoretically, many accents of Nigerian English (NigE) exist along geographical divisions influenced by the phonologies of the primary indigenous languages in the respective areas (Banjo, 1979; Dustan, 1969; Igboanusi, 2003; Simo Bobda, 1995) as well as the pedagogical models and environments of English acquisition and learning (Adetugbo, 1977; Awonusi, 1986). As Stevens (1965:113) rightly remarks, “one would expect a description of the pronunciations of English which may be heard in West Africa to bear close relationship to description of the phonetic characteristics of the language spoken as a mother tongue by various groups of people. **This is, in fact the case**” (emphasis not in original). Therefore, as part of its nativisation and standardisation, Nigerian English phonetically and phonologically aggregates some interference features of Nigerian indigenous languages especially those of Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba. Adetugbo (2004 [1978 / 1987]) however, contends using empirical and chronological data that Efik and Yoruba seem to have more pedagogical influence on the evolution of NigE phonology. In reality, Bamgbose's (1971:42) observations almost four decades ago that

The greatest influence on the pronunciation of English by Nigerians is the sound systems of the vernacular languages. Most of the phonetic characteristics in the English language of Nigerians can, of course, be traced to the transfer of features from their first language. Many people claim that they can tell what part of the country a Nigerian belongs to from the way he speaks English.

are still relevant in characterizing interference features in spoken NigE. Moreover, regional accents of NigE are products of a number of other factors:

historical differences in the time and manner of exposure to the English language and the pedagogical practices of its instructors which vary from one region of Nigeria to another. Nonetheless, the NigE continuum forms a cluster of regional and social varieties (Jibril, 1986).

Studies have also shown that people from different ethnic groups residing in adjacent parts of the country share many characteristics in their spoken English with one another while each group retains its particularities (Jibril, 1979; Simo Bobda, 2000; 2003). Strevens (1965) has proposed two phonologically delimited dialect differentiation of NigE: northern and southern dialects, but most linguists (e.g. Adetugbo, 1977, 2004 [1978]; Awonusi, 1985, 1986; Bamgbose, 1971; Banjo, 1971; Jibril 1982; Okoro, 1986, 2004) recognise three broad regional varieties of NigE namely, Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba English accents. For the analysis of the data for this study we subscribe to these three broad regional accents.

It should be stated that if social acceptability and transnational intelligibility are taken as key factors, NEAs conform to the speakers' perceptions about their dialects of NigE. For instance, Obayan, Dada & Oderinde (1979:250) interpret their findings on accents' acceptability by experimental subjects from five ethnic groups (i.e. Edo, Efik, Igbo, Ijaw and Yoruba) as implying that the majority of the subjects “tended to accept more readily that accent of English which appears to them closest to their own personal form of spoken English”.

Consonants	Realisations
/t, d/	[t, d], but also dental [t̪, d̪] in southern accents
/θ, ð/	[t, d; t̪, d̪] in the south; [t, d, s, z] in the north
/p, b, f, v/	Confusion in northern accents; possible further occurrence of labialised fricatives [ɸ] and [β] in the north
/l, r/	Overwhelming frequency of confusion in the south
/tʃ/	[ʃ] in many southern accents; occurrence of hypercorrect [tʃ] for /tʃ/
/ʃ/	[s] in some northern accents
/h/	Often silent in Yoruba and other southern accents; hypercorrect occurrence of /h/ also heard

*Realisation of consonants in NigE* (culled from Simo Bobda, 2007:285)

Vowels	Realisations
KIT, FLEECE	/i/; much shorter than RP /i:/
happY	/i/; /e/ in words in <i>-day</i>
horsEs	/i/ in plural, possessive and 3rd person singular forms; /ε/ with other cases involving orthographic <eC>
TRAP, BATH, PALM, START	/a/; much shorter than RP /ɑ:/
DRESS	Generally /ε/, but /e/ before one and only one medial consonant
LOT, CLOTH	/ɔ/
THOUGHT, NORTH, FORCE	/ɔ/; much shorter than RP /ɔ:/
STRUT	/ɔ/ in the south and /a/ in the north
CURE	Generally /ɔ/; but fluctuates with /ɔɑ/ in the north
FOOT, GOOSE	Generally /u/; much shorter than RP /u:/; occasionally /i/ in the north
NURSE	/a, ε, ɔ/ orthographically, geographically, ethnically and lexically determined
FACE	/e/; closer than DRESS
PRICE	/ai/, but monophthongisation to /a/ very common in the south
MOUTH	/au/, but monophthongisation to /a/ very common in the south
CHOICE	/ɔi/
GOAT	/o/; but also /ɔ/ before one and only one medial consonant
NEAR	/ia/
SQUARE	/ie, ia, eε, ea/ lectally and lexically conditioned
lettER	/a/ for orthographic <er, re, ear, ir>; /ɔ/ for <or, our, ure> in the south; /a/ but also /ɔ/ in the north
commA	A wide range of realisations generally, but not always, suggested by the spelling

*Peculiarities of vowel realisations in NigE* (culled from Simo Bobda, 2007:284)

So, compared to RP, NigE has fewer vowels and some consonants are realised differently regionally. For instance below are some of the consonantal variations in Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba English respectively (cf. Jibril, 1986; Gut, 2004):

Table 7: Realisations of consonants by Hausa speakers of NigE

/p/	[p], [f], [Φ]
/f/	[f], [p], [Φ]
/b/	[b], [v]
/v/	[v], [b]
/ð /	[ð], [z]
/θ/	[θ], [s]



Table 8: Igbo realisations of some consonants of NigE

/θ/	[θ], [t], [t̥]
/ð/	[ð], [d], [d̥]
/h̥/ (e.g. human)	[h]
/p̥/ (e.g. pupil)	[p]

Table 9: Yoruba realisations of some consonants of NigE

/v/	[v], [f]
/θ/	[θ], [t], [t̥]
/ð/	[ð], [d], [d̥]
/dʒ/	[dʒ], [ʒ]
/tʃ/	[tʃ], [ʃ]
/h/	[h], h-deletion
/z/	[z], [s]
/v/	[v], [f]

These variations, on the one hand, support the argument that NigE phonetically and phonologically aggregates some interference features of Nigerian indigenous languages and on the other hand are in line with Simo Bobda's (2007:297) observation that “[t]aking RP as a reference, NigE shares a wide range of its rules, does not apply some, applies others differently, and sometimes has rules not found in RP”.

#### 4.4 POLITICIANS AS EXPERIMENTAL SUBJECTS FOR VARIATION AND LINGUISTIC PARODIES

Electoral cycles are special times not only politically but also for linguistic research into the speech behaviours of politicians. A recent case in point is Purnell, Raimy & Salmons' (2009) analysis of Sarah Palin's “g-dropping” and final /z/ devoicing. Similarly, a humorous blog post written as a stylization of the speaking pattern of Nigeria's former president illustrates the graphemic representations of such in CMC. The author of the blog post under consideration uses the blogosphere

to relay a lighthearted message sent to his personal email account but acknowledges that the content is fictional. The URL is: <http://www.tayoodukoya.com/2007/05/acceptance-speech-of-president-elect.html> composed on 5 May 2007 with the title “Acceptance Speech of the President Elect”:

Sank you, sank you, my pellow Naijurians por ze goodwill messages.

I want to sank you por not boting por me as fresident of ze Pederal Refublic of Naijuria. But I received ze most imfortant botes prom Fresident Obasanjo and INEC. Zis is why I have now been declared ze winner of ze elections and ze fresident-elect of ze Pederal Refublic of Naijuria. Nagode to Obasanjo and nagode to INEC, for zia beri beri imfortant suffort.

Ze pirst task of my new gwament is to fray por feace and stability in Naijuria. I will now ask all ze depeated fresidential candidates to join me in a gwament of national unity. So I will bring back my priends like Atiku, General Babangida and Buhari into my new gwament.

I sink Atiku will be good as ze new head of ze EFCC. Fresident Obasanjo should not worry about my gwament frobing him, gaskiya, at least until apter May 29. Babangida will be ze new minister por pinance, and Buhari will be in charge of ze ministry of War Against Indiscifline.

My fipul, ze task before us is a great one, walahi talahi. I don't know where to start, but I want to ashuwa you zat I will act in consultation with all ze emirs and imams.

I am now going to Germany por treatment por exhaustion prom making zis sfeece. I shall be back por ze swearing in ceremony, inshallah.

One Nigeria, one Fee-Di-Fee, Fower to ze fipul.

Umaru Yar'Adua

Fresident-Elect

It should be noted that the blog post is situated within the Nigerian 2007 General Elections discourse. President Yar'Adua spoke fluent and internationally intelligible English and actually approximated nearer RP than most Nigerians but like many Nigerians, he was a multilingual with Fulfulde, Hausa and English prominently in his linguistic repertoire and when he spoke English it was easy to tell that he was from northern Nigeria. The speech accentuates pronunciation features of some educated Hausa speakers of NigE.

## The Fictional Speech in Standard Spelling

Thank you, thank you, my fellow **Nigerians** for **the** goodwill messages.

I want to **thank** you for not **voting** for me as **president** of **the** Federal Republic of **Nigeria**. But I received **the** most important **votes** from **President** Obasanjo and INEC. **This** is why I have now been declared **the** winner of **the** elections and **the** president-elect of **the** Federal Republic of **Nigeria**. *Thanks* to Obasanjo and *thanks* to INEC, for **their** very very important **support**.

**The** first task of my new **government** is to **pray** for **peace** and stability in **Nigeria**. I will now ask all **the** defeated **presidential** candidates to join me in a **government** of national unity. So I will bring back my **friends** like Atiku, General Babangida and Buhari into my new **government**.

I **think** Atiku will be good as **the** new head of **the** EFCC. **President** Obasanjo should not worry about my **government** probing him, *frankly speaking*, at least until after May 29. Babangida will be **the** new minister for finance, and Buhari will be in charge of **the** ministry of War Against Indiscipline.

My **people**, **the** task before us is a great one, *honestly*. I don't know where to start, but I want to **assure** you **that** I will act in consultation with all **the** emirs and imams.

I am now going to Germany for treatment for exhaustion from making **this** speech. I shall be back for **the** swearing in ceremony, *God willing*.

One Nigeria, one **P-D-P**, **Power** to **the** **people**.

Umaru Yar'Adua

President-Elect

The accentuation of ethnicity segmentally<sup>47</sup> in Nigerian CMC serves at least two purposes: first, it is an instantiation of factual phonological crossing (Coupland, 2001; Johnstone, 1999; Keim, 2007; Rampton, 1999; Sebba, 2007b); and it also involves cases of playful, 'parodistic' or fictional language crossing which have been reported in the public media of different countries (cf. Androutsopoulos, 2001; Bucholz, 1999; Hill, 1995; Ronkin & Karn, 1999).

### **4.5 GRAPHEMIC STYLIZATION OF NIGERIAN CASUAL SPEECH FEATURES**

The dichotomy between casual and careful spoken English by Nigerians is highlighted in our CMC data. The speech in the blog above is composed with a lot of pronunciation-induced spellings as part of the accentuation of shibboleths

---

<sup>47</sup> All examples referred to in this study enunciate segmental features unless otherwise stated.

in the spoken English of some educated northern Nigerians. The consonantal peculiarities of spoken Hausa English accentuated in the blog post have a higher frequency word-initially as follows (using RP phoneme as the base for projecting the corresponding spoken realisations) :

/p/ → [f]

*Word-initially*

fresident, fresident-elect, fresidential, fray, feace, frobing, fipul, Fee-Di-Fee, Fower

*Intervocally*

suffort

*Word-medially*

republic, imfortant, Indiscifline, sfeech,

/f/ → [p]

*Word-initially*

pellow, por, Pederal, prom, pirst, friends, pinance,

*Intervocally*

depeated, bepore,

*Word-medially*

apter

/v/ → [b]

boting, botes, beri

/ð / → [z]

ze, zia, zat, zis

/θ/ → [s]

sank, sink

The only pair not reflected in the speech is the /b/ → [b], [v] variant. However, *Nigerian* is realised thus: /naɪdʒɪrɪən/ → /naɪdʒurɪən/ highlighting the accentuated rules /ɪ/ → [u] and /ɪə/ → [ɪə] in the middle and final syllables respectively.

There are two interesting examples of phonetic re-spelling: *ashuwa* and *gwament*. And there are Hausa lexical items to flavour the speech: *nagode* (thank you) and *gaskiya* (honestly). The phrase *walahi talahi* (frankly speaking) and *inshallah* (God willing) are part of the vocabulary of northern Nigerians.

The blog readers' responses suggest that the blog post is taken for what it actually is – a jovial simulation of casual speech:

~**Mimi**~ said...

Lol ... I can imagine how many good jokes will come out of this one

Fee Di Fee!!!!!! Froggress!!! LMAO

**akin aworan** said...

Yeye joker!! :-)

**Niyi** said...

hahahahahaha.. that was hilarious.

**catwalq** said...

u guys are naughty.

who sat down to make this one now?

**truth** said...

hey Tayo. That was hilarious. who 'stewed' that up? good read though.

**Anonymous** said...

lmao that was so funny lol

**aloted** said...

Roflol..this is so funny...ah! I hope our new president will not be giving speeches like this in real life o!!! LOL

**Aloofa** said...

So Funny. Whoever did that must be really weird.

Furthermore, a thread in the Nigerian online forum, *Nigerian Village Square* (NVS), titled “The h and other language factors<sup>48</sup>” with 45 posts from Villagers (i.e. registered members of the virtual community) from July 30 to September 23, 2009 shall be used to illustrate other graphemic representations of regional/ethnic accents in terms of their phonotactic features. The thread is started as follows:

(I) The h and other language factors (MCT 2009/07/30)

Well it (sic) known that the Yoruba alphabet isn't too accommodating of the letter h, which is why many Yorubas are known to have this problem when attempting to pronounce some certain words.

I have noticed that an ogbonge (i.e. a typical) Yoruba person has a difficult (sic) pronouncing words like iron, kitchen, chicken, house correctly. I remember on my recent trip to Naija, I met a fine babe who was preparing to interview at a bank. I took the time to teach (sic) how to pronounce certain words but it was like pouring water in a basket.

My question is this, are there any Nigerian languages that have similar factors or is it just the Yorubas that are well known?

Ok...let's discuss

This initial post in the thread and others which follow adopt a conversational structure. We shall cull some realisations of phonological variation and explain them.

## 1. H-insertion and h-dropping

H-insertion is the use of the voiceless glottal fricative /h/ in normally h-less words (eg. anywhere, orange, inside, Internet, independence). Awonusi (2004:215) identifies some 'h' realisations in NigE such as: (a) H-weakening / dropping (i.e. the loss or non-articulation of /h/ in words like *hotel*, *hear*, *history* etc); (b) H-restoration (i.e. the spelling-induced pronunciation of /h/ in words like *honour*, *hour*, *heir*); and (c) H-insertion.

---

<sup>48</sup> <http://nigeriavillagesquare.com/forum/lounge/33856-h-other-language-factors.html>

H-insertion is characteristic of many Yoruba speakers of English in Nigeria. But in the NVS thread under discussion, a Villager asserts that this feature (which she calls the “H factor”) is not restricted to Yoruba speakers of English:

(II) Re: The h and other language factors Jul 30, 2009 05:20 AM

Some Ijaws also have the "H" factor.

hoff the light

she it me on the ead (She hit me on the head)

We find instances of h-insertion (*off* as 'hoff') and h-dropping (*hit* as 'it'; *head* as 'ead') in this post. Another Villager in her contribution comments on the humour with some examples from Igbo-speakers of English as follows:

(III) Re: The h and other language factors Jul 30, 2009 07:40 PM

This thread is simply hilarious.

Anyway, some of my Igbo people have the tendency to end certain words with the alphabet "U".

Love = Loovu

work = worku

house = hausu

bill = billu

hotel = hoteelu

telephone = telefoonu

As for the Yoruba "h", I know someone who left Naija immediately after High school, is very well educated and she is still battling with it. Except when she makes a conscious effort, it is slightly noticeable. It does not stop her from taking home a fat paycheck though.:p

Similarly, the first male contributor to the thread has this to say:

(IV) Re: The h and other language factors Aug 3, 2009 11:35 AM

I have the 'No H' Factor and you may think this wouldn't be a problem. Well

it wasn't when I lived in naija but try telling someone in the west; I am staying overnight in the 'otel' or I can't 'ear' you, then you will realise what a big problem it is.

By 'No H' the above Villager is referring to H-dropping in *hotel* and *hear* respectively. However, in our other Light up Nigeria (LUN) data, there are instances of H-insertion too like *ignorant idiots* as 'hignorant hediots'.

## 2. The Realisation of /tʃ/ as /s/ or /ʃ/

Yoruba speakers of English are mostly the ones who are prone to speaking like this. One of the female Villagers highlights it as follows:

(V) Re: The h and other language factors Jul 30, 2009 05:27 AM

But like you pointed out, The Yoruba "H" and "Ch" factor is a lot more common.

Chicken -Shikin  
Church -shosh etc.

This is an obvious response to the initiator of the thread in (I). The affricate /tʃ/ does not exist in standard Yoruba phonology. Hence the realisation of *chicken* as 'sicken' or 'shicken'. Similarly, /tʃ/ in *church* is substituted with /ʃ/ as in 'shosh'.

## 3. Monophthongizations of the diphthong /ɔɪ/ in *oil*

Jibril (1982), Awonusi (2004) and Igboanusi (2006) all agree about this fact in the English of people of Igbo extraction. The diphthong is not in Igbo phonology. Hence, its monophthongizations in Igbo English. While responding to another poster, a Villager brings this matter up:



(VI) Re: The h and other language factors Aug 17, 2009 02:43 PM

Quote-----

Originally Posted by \_\_\_\_

In my part of Anambra, the villagers pronounce F like u would a V eg,they say provessor(professor) or post oviz(post office).Even the ss in professor sounds like Z,so its more like provezzor.

-----  
In my part of Edo State, na so we (sorry, them) dey pronounce 'assembly' as 'azzembly'. See my wife dey laff die every time my pastor friend (who by the way has first class in International Relations and master's in International Law and Diplomacy) dey introduce his church as '...Azzembly'.

Another pastor friend of mine couldn't but tell me after sitting under my ministration how much he enjoyed the message except the 'oyeli' (oil) bit. His wife had to remind him dat his 'Oyo tongue' takes over too any time he ministers.

Chei! Dis kin tin na wa o.

First, the poster to whom this Villager responds, writes about the realisation of /f/ as /v/ in *professor* in an Anambra dialect of Igbo with the following rule:

$$/f/ \rightarrow /v/ / V \underline{\hspace{1cm}} V$$

while this Villager reports the voicing of /s/ in *assembly* by Edos

$$/s/ \rightarrow [+ \text{ voice}] / V \underline{\hspace{1cm}} V$$

and recounts his friend's observation of his own monophthongizations of /ɔI/ in *oil* as 'oyeli'. Although this Villager in question is an Edo, this is mostly typical of the Igbo.

In another thread, a Yoruba Villager phonologically crosses into Igbo in his

response as he writes “Oyel na Oyel<sup>49</sup>” (i.e. *oil is oil*) and in a poem, a Villager expresses himself in (VII) below:

(VII) Re: Molue Rush<sup>50</sup> Sep 11, 2010 11:22 PM

I wondered, whether there really is a government in Nigeria ?  
To no one in particular, I asked: Where is Nigeria's **oyel** money ?  
Oh my good people of Nigeria, as they say “ee go better”

Generally, we observe that some Villagers cross into Igbo whenever they write “more oyel for your elbow” for *more power to your elbow*.

#### 4. Alternation between /l/ and /r/

According to Igboanusi (2006:495), alternations of this kind are regarded as 'performances' or in this instance stylizing an accent typical of the Igbo. A male Villager gives a humorous example in the thread:

(VIII) Re: The h and other language factors Jul 30, 2009 07:55 PM

This is Ledio Benue  
You are ristening to Ledio Lequest time  
We are plesenting Leggie Leggie music

This is Radio Benue  
You are listening to Radio Request time  
We are Presenting Reggie Reggie music

To conclude our discussion on this particular thread, perhaps the post (IX) below by a female Villager best summarizes the matter:

---

<sup>49</sup> <http://nigeriavillagesquare.com/forum/main-square/27184-can-someone-link-me-up-dokubo-gani-adams-2.html#post294360>

<sup>50</sup> <http://nigeriavillagesquare.com/forum/inkpots/57094-molue-rush.html#post479950>

(IX) Re: The h and other language factors Jul 30, 2009 06:25 AM

Every corner of Naija get their own "Igbotic and Ngbatic" accent

Some of us just use style, small exposure and general fone (i.e. phonetics) to cover up the whole thing until we get angry then we revert back to our God given fone until we catch ourselves. It's not easy to keep up my sister. wetin man go do

### 5. Substitution of /g/ with /k/

We shall briefly mention a jovial marking and mocking the speech habits of people of Efik ethnicity using another blog post by a female Nigerian in Florida, USA. The blog is titled 'Oka-Madam' (referring to a female boss and definitely an act of crossing). 'Oga' is a loan into Nigerian English from Yoruba meaning "master".

(X) Oka-Madam<sup>51</sup> (FF2010/06/23)

Till date, I've worked in five different outfits. Three of them were directly under a female boss. For the first, I was asked during the interview if I could work under a woman. I remember wondering what the big deal was. *Abi*, she no b person? I said I had no issues. I got the job, and consequently become a line-manager to the elder cleaner. Okay, let's start with my own *oga* first.

It has been reported (e.g. Adetugbo, 1977; Awonusi, 2004; Igboanusi, 2006) that this is a feature of Efikness because according to Dunstan (1969:38), in Efik phonology [g] is an allophone of /k/ in non-initial positions.

Overall, in the data presented in this chapter, the regional variations are mostly accentuated in consonants. And we conclude by affirming our earlier-stated position that the accentuation of ethnicity segmentally in Nigerian CMC serves at

---

<sup>51</sup> <http://flourishingflorida.net/2010/06/23/oka-madam/>

least two purposes: first, it is an instantiation of factual phonological crossing (Coupland, 2001; Johnstone, 1999; Keim, 2007; Rampton, 1999; Sebba, 2007b); and secondly, it involves cases of playful, 'parodistic' or fictional language crossing (cf. Androutsopoulos, 2001; Bucholz, 1999; Hill, 1995; Ronkin & Karn, 1999).

# Part III

The present Nigerian government is perhaps the most Web 2.0-friendly government in Africa because Nigeria has been acknowledged by the US political technologist, Joe Trippi, as the first country to use Facebook for democratic governance, which is significant for the African democratization process. President Goodluck Jonathan's adoption of Facebook on June 28, 2010 as an avenue for online deliberation with digitally-connected Nigerian netizens received nation-wide commendation; thus Nigeria is on the verge of the most astonishing open government in her entire political existence. Indeed, it was the first of its kind in the history of Nigeria for a public official in the calibre of the president to lay a better foundation for transparency and accountability in governance by using his Facebook post<sup>52</sup> to assure the citizenry of his intention to actualize participatory democracy as follows:

What I do promise is this – if I am elected President in 2011, **I will make a covenant with you the Nigerian people** to always do right by (*sic*) you, **to tell you the truth at all times**, to carry you along and **most importantly to listen to you**, fellow citizens in our communities and **also those of you on this page**.

I do not want to win your affections by giving you promises of things I would do in the future which others before me have given and which have largely been unfulfilled. Rather, **I would want you to judge me by my records** [Emphasis added].

On October 1, 2010 CNN named Nigeria's Goodluck Jonathan the Facebook President. This is a remarkable endorsement of not just the person of the Nigerian president, but also of how a global product (Facebook) is being appropriated for internal governance in Nigeria.

Other prominent Nigerian elected public officials have embraced social media for informing and engaging citizens on governance issues in their respective constituencies. This is a very good sign for the emerging democracy in Nigeria because through social media an “online public sphere” (Castells, 2008; Tsaliki,

---

<sup>52</sup> [http://www.facebook.com/note.php?note\\_id=154926121201698&comments&ref=mf](http://www.facebook.com/note.php?note_id=154926121201698&comments&ref=mf)  
Declaration of Intent For The 2011 Presidential Race September 15, 2010

2002; Witschge, 2008) is now a possibility in Nigeria and ordinary literate citizens can constructively engage politicians on policy and governance matters without a bureaucratic brick wall or procedural filtering. This action also meets one of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UN-ECA) governance project's goals which is to “gauge citizens' opinion on the state of governance in their respective countries and communities”<sup>53</sup>. Nonetheless, it buttresses Ibrahim Index for participation statement (2010) that “[t]he ability of citizens to participate in the political process is a vital gauge of the legitimacy of government” perhaps because an informed and empowered citizenry are fundamental to any democratization experiment and no significant progress can be made in Nigeria's political transformation without public space, policy debates and public dialogues (Tourine, 1998).

In his December 1, 2010 Facebook post<sup>54</sup>, President Jonathan promised to publish a book based on his online interactions with Nigerians on December 20, 2010. The title of the publication is *My Friends and I: Conversations on policy and governance via facebook*. By December 27, 2010 the book was launched in Nigeria, which is interpreted as an online promise fulfilled with face to face dialogues with the Nigerian citizenry. Below is a tag cloud<sup>55</sup> of selected lexical items from the feedback of 95, 801 Facebook comments by readers of the President's Facebook page:

2 2011 4 am believe bless change continue country  
 dat day dear doing dont election excellency god goodluck  
 government happy help hope issue jonathan leader life look  
 love money name nation national nigeria nigerian  
 nigerians people please pls power pray  
 president road sir support thank time ur  
 vote wish world

<sup>53</sup> <http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/un/unpan020257.pdf>

<sup>54</sup> <http://www.facebook.com/notes/goodluck-jonathan/lets-revive-a-reading-culture-in-nigeria-be-my-personal-guest/175816915779285>

<sup>55</sup> Generated with the software DiscoverText

Therefore, this part of the study documents the discursive and interactive uses of new media as social practice as well as for democratization in Nigeria from 2007 to 2010. By December 2010, Nigerian Facebook users are over 2 million<sup>56</sup> and about 15% of them are 'friends' to the President. It will be shown that Nigeria is experimenting with democracy in novel ways never before witnessed by any African country.

Taking up the third research question of this study, language use in the new media for either electioneering, politicking or the enhancement of good governance ethics reflects a dialectical interplay of language, politics and technology. Klein (1998) argues that the “linguistic study of political communication” constitutes a sub-discipline of linguistics while Burkhardt (1996) opines that “all types of public, institutional and private talks on politics as well as the use of lexical and stylistic linguistic instruments characterising talks about political contexts” are regarded as being within the domain of political discourse.

Chapter 5 is on blogging and micro-blogging in the 2007 general elections while chapter 6 is on Twittering the 2009 re-run elections.

---

<sup>56</sup> This is according to the statistics provided by socialbakers which puts the exact figure as 2, 171, 480 in December 2010 <http://www.socialbakers.com/facebook-statistics/nigeria>



## CHAPTER 5

### BLOGGING AND MICRO-BLOGGING THE 2007 NIGERIAN GENERAL ELECTIONS

Blogs have done more than simply nail the scalps of politicians and media figures to the wall. They have also played a highly important role in shaping campaign tactics and strategy.

– Drezner & Farrell (2008:3)

The public sphere is an essential component of sociopolitical organization because it is the space where people come together as citizens and articulate their autonomous views to influence the political institutions of society.

– Castells (2008)

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter seeks to examine the linguistic construction of textual messages and the negotiation of political empowerment in social media discourse during the Nigerian 2007 electoral cycle. Suffice it to say, however, that the date “2007” as used in the title of this chapter is semantically loose with an extended meaning and refers to the voting *process* that commenced in Nigeria on April 14, 2007 and has continued till August 15, 2009. Owing to irregularities and electoral malpractices of the April 2007 elections, protracted legal battles have been undertaken by some candidates and Nigerian courts have overturned some of the 2007 results and ordered re-run of the elections. Such re-run gubernatorial elections were held in Ekiti State as recently as on April 25, 2009 and May 5, 2009 and a re-run senatorial election was held on August 15, 2009 also in Ekiti State. Although some of the re-run elections have taken place between 2007 and 2009, the entire *process* is still referred to as the Nigerian 2007 elections thereby extending the temporal denotation of the electoral year 2007. In spite of the digital divide in developed and developing countries, there are similarities between the use of social media in the Nigerian case under consideration and the role of weblogs in the American 2004 and 2008 elections as well as the use of

Twitter in post-electoral protests in the Iranian 2009 presidential election.

Nigeria's political system of governance is conceptually patterned after that of the United States of America (USA). While the USA represents one of the most established democracies in the world, Nigeria can be said to be an example of an emerging democracy. Nigeria and the USA operate a federal presidential system whereby there is separation of powers among independent executive, legislative and judiciary branches of government. The head of the executive arm is the President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces while the legislature is divided into two complementary law enactment chambers: the Senate (or the upper house) and the House of Representatives (or the lower house). The judiciary is headed by a Supreme Court Chief Justice and is mainly preoccupied with the interpretation of the nation's constitution as well as serving as the final arbiter in legal disputes. The executive and the legislative branches of the presidential system of government are elective positions through balloting at primaries (i.e. at party-levels) and general elections (at regional and national levels). Therefore, as a nascent democracy, Nigeria has adopted the American presidential system but the specifics of its practice in both countries show that there are variations.

By historical coincidence, Nigeria shares a problematic June 12 electoral date with Iran. On June 12 1993, Nigeria conducted what is considered the freest and fairest general elections on Nigerian soil but which were scuttled by the military and this led to public unrest and eventual loss of lives. Similarly, the Iranian presidential election was held on June 12, 2009. Foreign media and international observers were not given access to cover the Iranian election but it was allegedly fraught with irregularities and as a result the initial official declaration of the incumbent president as the winner was greeted with protests by Iranians who felt they were deprived of the electoral freedom to choose who governs them. The aftermath of both the Nigerian 1993 and the Iranian 2009 June 12 elections was

civil unrest and protests. With the ban on foreign media, aggrieved Iranians resorted to using the Internet, especially Twitter and Facebook, to protest the electoral injustice. The use of Twitter gave the Iranian protests speedy and worldwide publicity. With respect to the Nigerian 2007 and the Iranian 2009 elections, social media might not have significantly influenced the results of the elections, but access to Web 2.0 technologies surely encouraged more public discussions about politics and made the democratic process more dynamic than in the pre-social media era.

In comparison with the USA, Internet penetration in Nigeria is still quite low but wired and wireless interconnectivity is becoming widespread in Nigeria. Indeed Nigeria is witnessing an Internet and mobile telephony boom. The Nigerian telecommunications industry achieved a historic feat in August 2001 when three Global System for Mobile Communication (GSM) providers commenced licensed operations. The enthusiasm this liberalisation of mobile telephony generated in Nigerians surpassed investors' projections and official predictions. In 2007, there were 40 million active mobile phone subscribers<sup>57</sup> and 10 million Internet users in Nigeria<sup>58</sup>. However, from a mere 200 thousand Internet users in the Year 2000, there are now 23 million Internet users (as of December 2009) which represents 16.1% of the nation's population resulting in a significant 71% Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) for the five-year period, 2003 – 2008. Nigeria is now included in the success stories of ICT growth rate in Africa and there are signs that this trend is likely to continue in the years ahead. On the African continent, Nigerians account for 27.8% of Internet users. Most users access the Internet at work or Internet cafés and a growing population of private users have access at home via wireless connection and mobile phones at relatively affordable prices.

---

<sup>57</sup> Source: Nigerian Communications Commission (Telecoms Subscriber Information, Year 2001 - 2008)

<sup>58</sup> Source: International Telecommunication Union (ITU)

[http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/ict/statistics/at\\_glance/af\\_ictindicators\\_2007.html](http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/ict/statistics/at_glance/af_ictindicators_2007.html)

The Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) in its September 2009 report states that there are 67 million active mobile phone subscribers in Nigeria which indicates that Nigeria has become Africa's largest mobile phone market. Statistically, mobile phone penetration in Nigeria increased from 1% in 2002 to 27% in 2007 (according to the ITU's *Information Society Statistical Profiles, 2009*) while mobile broadband became available in 2007. The increasing number of Nigerians with Internet access and mobile telephony subscription means that more and more previously faceless and voiceless citizens are being electronically empowered. It is therefore arguable that the freedom of expression and opinion which social media and mobile telephony promote have further liberalised the pursuit and practice of democracy. It then becomes difficult for autocratic governance to thrive for too long when ordinary citizens are electronically-empowered and they can engage in public discussions about how the country is being governed. Thus, electronic empowerment in the Nigerian context includes the following: the liberalisation of GSM services which has enabled millions of Nigerians to have access to mobile phones for de-medialized horizontal communication; increasing Internet penetration among the populace especially in the major cities; citizen online activism (Jennings and Zeitner, 2003); and the fact that there were no reported cases of Internet filtering by government agencies during the elections (OpenNet Initiative, 2007).

This investigation is a qualitative study carried out under the rubrics of two complementary multidisciplinary frameworks namely computer-mediated discourse analysis (CMDA) and sociocultural discourse analysis (SDA). The kernel of both frameworks is discourse analysis with a focus on the situational, cultural and technological influences on digital dialogues (as well as monologues and polylogues). Analysing social media discourse is naturally within the province of CMDA. CMDA employs methods and techniques adapted from language-focused disciplines to the analysis of text-based language use mediated

by the Internet and mobile technologies (Herring, 2004). In other words, any linguistically-anchored analysis of electronically-mediated data or the analysis of online behaviour that is grounded in empirical, textual observations is CMDA. As formulated in this work, SDA combines the analytical paradigms of sociocultural linguistics (Bucholtz and Hall, 2005) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). It focuses on the dynamics of language production, processing and reception in relation to the workings of culture and society and operates with some tenets and theoretical paradigms of CDA. SDA weaves various strands of the social and historical aspects of any discourse event analysed thereby treating discourse as a social occurrence situated in temporal, spatial, political, cultural and linguistic contexts. Integrating CMDA and SDA frameworks into one simplified analytic technique, the linguistic data in this study are analysed using the triadic principles proposed by Fairclough (1995:98) - hereafter, the DIE trajectories: *description*, *interpretation* and *explanation*.

The thesis of this study is that citizens' access to social media electronically empowers the electorates to be actively involved in public discussions about politics and in negotiating the terms of democratic governance with institutionally empowered politicians and leaders. In other words, electronic empowerment enables de-medialized public spheres (Castells, 2007; Quan-Haase *et al.*, 2002; Wellman *et al.*, 2003). The dialectical relationship between language and the process of political empowerment can be textually illustrated through the choice of words and sentiments expressed in blog posts and tweets. The remainder of this chapter is structured as follows: Section 2 presents descriptions of relevant social media components and the research questions; Section 3 is an overview of political blogging and social networking in cross-continental contexts; Section 4 is an account of situational occurrences before and after the Nigerian 2007 elections; the data are introduced in Section 5; a discursive examination of power negotiation is carried out in Section 6, and Section 7 is the conclusion.

## 5.2 SOCIAL MEDIA TECHNOLOGIES

In the late 1990s a new wave of online personal publishing was integrated to the World Wide Web. Later, a newer trend of electronically-mediated interpersonal interactions soon emerged in the form of Web 2.0 technologies. As a nascent and growing field of digital study, there exist more functional descriptions than definitions of Web 2.0 / social media technologies. However, according to WebContent.gov, “Social Media and Web 2.0 are umbrella terms that define the various activities that integrate *technology, social interaction, and content creation*. Social media use the “wisdom of crowds” to *connect information in a collaborative manner online*”<sup>59</sup> (italics added). Simply put, “friendliness”, social networking and flexible information sharing are some of the principal goals of social media platforms. Two pertinent social media technologies discussed in this chapter are weblogs and microblogs (e.g. Twitter).

Weblogs (or blogs) are usually defined based on the thematic focus of an enquiry. Weblogs have been defined, for instance, as “personal “diary-like” format websites enabled by easy to use tools and open for everyone” (Efimova and Fiedler, 2004); “webpage on which the author publishes pieces with the intention to start conversation” (Wijnia, 2004); “frequently updated website consisting of dated entries arranged in reverse chronological order” (Walker, 2003); “a series of archived Internet posts typically characterized by brief texts entered in reverse chronological order and generally containing hypertext links to other sites recommended by the author” (Nardi *et al.*, 2004b); and “frequently updated websites, usually personal, with commentary and links” (de Moor and Efimova, 2004). The basic differentiating characteristic of weblogs and microblogs from other forms of computer-mediated communication (CMC) is the format: frequently updated reverse chronological journaling. Blogging, therefore, is *the act* of writing online journals to chronicle and communicate one’s thoughts (on issues of personal interests, events and news) to either a specific target audience

---

<sup>59</sup> [http://www.usa.gov/webcontent/technology/other\\_tech.shtml](http://www.usa.gov/webcontent/technology/other_tech.shtml)

or the wider reading public. Blogging is also a novel form of grassroots citizen journalism and “a way to shape democracy outside the mass media and conventional party politics” (Gillmor, 2003 [cited in Nardi *et al.*, 2004c]). The authors of weblogs are known as bloggers (or bloggers).

Grouping weblogs into categories, Herring *et al.*, (2005) classify them as belonging into one of three major types: filters, personal journals and k-logs. Filter blogs primarily contain observations and evaluations of external, predominantly public events; personal journals are used to report events in the blogger’s life as well as the blogger’s cognitive states; and k-logs (short for knowledge blogs) dwell on information and observations focused around an external topic, project or product (e.g. software or a research project). Personal journal blog types are the most common of the three mentioned above.

Microblogging is one of the most recent forms of electronically-mediated social interaction and currently there is very little academic research on it because of its relative novelty. The available studies have been mainly about Twitter (Honeycutt and Herring, 2009; Huberman, Romero and Wu, 2009; Java *et al.*, 2006; Mischaud, 2007). Conceptually, microblogging is “a combination of some of the best features of email, text messaging (SMS), blogging, and instant messaging (IM). The result has the flexibility of email, the ubiquity of SMS and the immediacy of IM, whilst its content can be browsed, referenced or indexed like a traditional blog”<sup>60</sup>. Whereas WebConnect.gov defines it as “writing extremely short blog posts, kind of like text messages”<sup>61</sup>, it is defined elsewhere as “a form of multimedia blogging that allows users to send brief text updates or micromedia such as photos or audio clips and publish them, either to be viewed by anyone or by a restricted group which can be chosen by the user. These messages can be submitted by a variety of means, including text messaging,

---

<sup>60</sup> [http://www.stress-free.co.nz/using\\_microblogging\\_to\\_record\\_architectural\\_design\\_conversation\\_alongside\\_the\\_bim](http://www.stress-free.co.nz/using_microblogging_to_record_architectural_design_conversation_alongside_the_bim)

<sup>61</sup> <http://www.usa.gov/webcontent/technology/microblogging.shtml> Retrieved on 15 September 2009

instant messaging, email, digital audio or the web”<sup>62</sup>. Twitter is the most popular microblogging social software. It was invented in October 2006 by a team of people based in San Francisco, USA. As an Internet-based microblogging tool, Twitter prompts users to share brief messages about their current activities either publicly or within a social network of friends and followers. Since its emergence in 2006, Twitter has been used for conversational exchanges, collaboration among users with common interests and goals, co-ordination of events, and for the dissemination of news and information (Honeycutt and Herring, 2009; Java *et al.*, 2006; Mischaud, 2007). The brevity of its messages and its multi-platform input method are some of the reasons why people find it easy to use. For instance the tweets for this study were sent through the web, mobile phones and third party clients as indicated in Table 10 below.

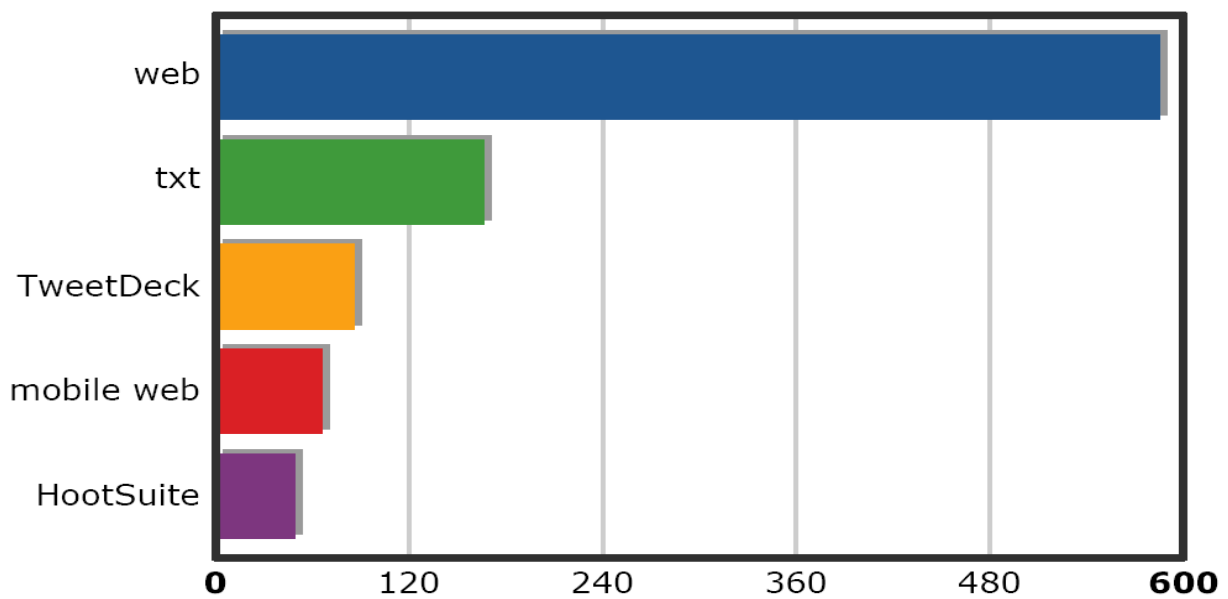


Table 10: Ekiti re-run elections Twitter interface and clients

Motivated by Searle’s (2003) claim that “all political power, though exercised from above, comes from below”, this study discursively illustrates the *bottom-up* power negotiation patterns via blogging and microblogging. The specific questions addressed therefore include the following:

<sup>62</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Microblogging> Retrieved on 15 September 2009



- (a). What roles do blogs and Twitter play in 21<sup>st</sup> Century political discourse and activities?
- (b). In what ways are event-driven (micro-)blogging challenging autocratic tendencies and at the same time promoting democracy?
- (c). How can computer-mediated and discourse analytic frameworks enunciate power negotiation between the electronically empowered ordinary citizens and the institutionally empowered politicians and leaders?

### **5.3 CROSS-CONTINENTAL POLITICAL BLOGGING AND SOCIAL NETWORKING**

Social media have played significant roles in recent electioneering across continents. For instance, in the US 2006 congressional races and the 2008 election Facebook transformed campaigns and electoral processes (Williams and Gulati, 2008), the blogosphere immensely altered the way contributors and campaigners collect money (Feld and Wilcox, 2008), the Iranian blogosphere liberalised political discourse in the face of a hostile media environment (Kelly and Etling, 2008) and Twitter was used by ordinary citizens to provide insider up-to-date information about the Iranian 2009 post-election protests.

Blogging and microblogging serve as the technology of socialization and grassroots mobilization in electioneering and modern political contests. Previous research on weblogs has examined aspects of blogging vis-à-vis the forms and functions of weblogs: as a distinct genre of CMC (Herring *et al.*, 2004, 2005); as social activity (Nardi *et al.*, 2004a); for grassroots journalism (Gillmor, 2003; Gill, 2004); for political mobilization (Cross, 2005; Drezner and Farrell, 2004); and for partisan politics (Adamic and Glance, 2005). In their book, *Netroots Rising: How a Citizen of Bloggers and Online Activists is Changing American Politics*, Feld and Wilcox (2008) provide the historical circumstances that led to the emergence of Howard Dean's *Blog for America* in 2004, the precursor of political blogging by candidates. The eventual presidential candidates from the

Democratic and Republican parties (John Kerry and George Bush respectively) adopted the blog for campaigning, but Bush's blog had more posts to prospective young adult voters than Kerry's (Trammell, 2007).

In 2008, the Barack Obama team used blog and Twitter to disseminate crucial information about Obama's bid for the White House. One of the most memorable Obama tweets was that of August 10, 2008 where he notified his "followers" of his intention to announce his VP pick by text message and emails.

On September 25, 2008 Twitter added Election 2008 feature (<http://election.twitter.com>) to its services for real-time commentary on the US 2008 presidential candidates and debates, citizens' reflections and reactions to the electoral process as well as using the platform to monitor the results and outcome of the election.

The 2008 American election shows that when ordinary citizens have access to Web 2.0 technologies, these technologies enable de-medialized public spheres and horizontal communication and mobilization. Additionally, blogging and microblogging are a means of bottom-up power negotiation by the allowance of divergent opinions and a variety of voices being aired which promote a healthy democratic culture.

#### **5.4 THE SOCIO-HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE 2007 NIGERIAN ELECTIONS AND THEREAFTER**

General elections in Nigeria have always been controversial due to the endemic problems of electoral malpractices, voting irregularities and rigging of poll results. The only exception is the 1993 Presidential Election which was locally and internationally acclaimed as the best election Nigeria has ever conducted, and adjudged peaceful, free and fair by all standards. The then military President Ibrahim Babangida, however, annulled the June 12, 1993 electoral victory of

Chief M.K.O. Abiola before the results became official because the success of the election as well as voters' turn out was contrary to government projection. As it is the nature of past Nigerian dictators, the 1993 elections were programmed to fail.

Nigerians everywhere anticipated the 2007 elections with great expectations because it was the first time in the country's history that one civilian government was to be handing over the baton of power to another civilian government, supposedly democratically elected. Since gaining independence in 1960, Nigeria has been bedevilled by unrepentant military rulers who prey on Nigerians by truncating the previous transition programmes. The only democracy-friendly military regimes Nigeria has had are those of General Olusegun Obasanjo (1976 - 1979) who handed over power to a democratically elected government in 1979, and of General Abdulsalam Abubakar (1998 - 1999) who handed over power to Olusegun Obasanjo (as a civilian) on May 29, 1999 to usher in the Fourth Republic of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Since the 2003 Presidential Election saw Obasanjo retaining power for a second term in office, the transition programme was seen more as that of continuity of government. The real challenge of honesty for the Obasanjo civilian rule was to conduct credible elections in 2007 and truthfully hand over power to another civilian government but this turned out to be Obasanjo's Achilles' heel.

Eventually, elections for the 36 State Governors and 990 Legislators in the 36 State Houses of Assembly were held on April 14, 2007 and elections for the President of Nigeria, 109 Members of the Senate and 360 Members of the House of Representatives took place on April 21, 2007. Local monitoring groups and the international community in unison referred to the elections as being highly flawed. The European Union observers and the US State Department both gave damning verdicts a few days after the elections.

Nevertheless, in an interview reported on 4 April 2005 by the “Chinua Achebe Foundation” Series 3, Chief Ernest Shonekan appears to have hit the nail on the head on the root cause of electoral misadventure in Nigeria:

The problem with elections in Nigeria seems to be connected with the lack of a democratic culture, and this is, itself, a product of the prolonged period of military rule. With a well-developed democratic culture, it will become clear that winning and losing cannot be divorced from democracy. The current approach is to win at all cost. And therefore the electoral process is compounded. I consider this as part of the teething problems associated with democracy.

As earlier mentioned, documented irregularities of the April 2007 elections led to a series of electoral litigations and at least one third of the initially declared winners have had the Nigerian law courts either validate or nullify the results, necessitating re-run elections in cases of nullification.

Blogging is a recent phenomenon in the Nigerian democratic culture. Actually, the 2007 electoral process was the first time in Nigerian history in which blogging played any role for mobilization, monitoring and measuring the success or otherwise of elections. Using the *Nigerian Blog Aggregator* (<http://nigerianbloggers.com>), blog entries from 8 January 2005 to 2 January 2008 are culled as data for this study with a total of 245 blogs. The blog data sequentially divide into three groups: *pre-elections* (dealing mostly with voters’ registration and preparation for the events), the April *elections* (held on the 14th and 21st April, 2007) and the *post-elections* blogs (15 – 20 April 2007 and 22 April 2007 to 2 January 2008) as presented in Table 11:

Date	Activities	Number of Posts	%
08 January 2005 – 13 April 2007	Pre-Elections Socialization and Mobilization	156	63.7
14 April 2007	<i>Gubernatorial and State Houses of Assembly Elections</i>	6	2.4
15 – 20 April 2007	Post-Gubernatorial and State Houses of Assembly Elections	14	5.7
21 April 2007	<i>Presidential and National Assembly Elections</i>	2	0.8
22 April 2007 – 02 January 2008	Post-General Elections	67	27.3

Table 11: *Summary of 2007 Elections-related Blog Posts*

It is noteworthy that 63.7% of the data actually have to do with motivating and mobilizing people for the elections. The first blog (BLOG 01<sup>63</sup>) in this series emphasizes the need for a drastic action to be taken to forestall previous woes associated with elections in Nigeria. Similarly, the number of blogs whose contents were mainly to spur the Nigerian electorates into desirable civic actions confirm that the weblog is a medium for socialization and grassroots mobilization. After the rancorous 2003 elections, the Nigerian masses needed to be encouraged to shun civic apathy and exercise their fundamental human rights to democratically elect their leaders. Although the blogs (e.g. BLOG 02 – 04) posted on April 14, 2007 are numerically insignificant (only 2.4%), the message is pungent and strategic. For instance BLOG 04 monitored the voting process and

---

<sup>63</sup> See the Appendix for excerpts of the selected blog data.

discussions of perceived 'exit polls'<sup>64</sup>.

The central message on blogs after the April 14, 2007 elections was the pronouncement by the Supreme Court of Nigeria that the then vice-president would be contesting the April 21, 2007 Presidential Election as a qualified candidate, contrary to the expectation of the incumbent president. It was a sort of indictment on the executive excesses of President Obasanjo and for the first time since the commencement of the electoral process, the certainty of the Presidential Election taking place as scheduled became seriously doubtful. The other blogs in this category discussed the results and bloggers who acted as 'foot soldiers' on April 14 documented their experiences and accounts of the elections. Consider the accounts of the Purpose Driven Blog (17 April 2007):

[BLOG 05]

Elections started around 10 a.m but I was ready to go a-voting by 12 noon ...

Oh yes, I voted for Jimi Agbaje ("Do you want same of the same Or Jimi Agbaje") ...

But really were the election results really fair and free like they claim? I wonder what will happen next week as per presidential elections and results.

Moreover, other bloggers provided insightful comments and overview of the first leg of the elections with specific reference to the roles bloggers played in the exercise.

---

<sup>64</sup> An exit poll is a poll taken immediately after an election as voters leave the polling stations. People are asked how and who they voted for in order to predict the result of the election and to analyse the factors that influenced voters' choices.

Moving on to blogging the main Presidential Election, there were at least two informative bloggers who put in their best to spread the word across the globe. An active blogger, Tayo Odukoya, relays his eye-witness accounts of the D-day in his blog post of April 21, 2007:

[BLOG 07]

Today is the day many people have been waiting for. It's the day of the Presidential Elections in Nigeria, and hopefully the day in which the fate of Nigeria's future will be changed, for better. I just returned from the election booth (if it can be called a booth) some minutes ago ...

The first observation was that the voting spot was quite devoid of people.

There have been reports of people absconding with ballot boxes (bags) and some disturbances here and there. Also, this morning there was an attempted sabotage on the INEC office in Abuja. Thankfully, it failed.

Similarly, another US-based blogger (Adaure Achumba) in her post of April 21, 2007 was able to gather and collate available reports for the day. One can tell from the tone of her message that Nigerian politicians were unrepentant of their old rigging tricks:

[BLOG 08]

The news coming from around the country is obviously discouraging and is what was expected from *I-MESS*, I mean I-NEC ,the electoral body. Which brings me to the subject of disorganization. When will Nigeria and Nigerians get organized. Everything is a problem, a fight,

*big-big wahala. Census na kwanta, Voters registration the same thing, election sef na by the miracle of God we have am...*

Voting in Saturday's presidential and national assembly elections ended in many parts of the country at 5pm. Reports from across the country indicate that the exercise was characterized by low voter turnout ... (emphasis in italics added: loan words and Nigerian Pidgin clauses).

It is evident that the April 21 elections failed to meet the expectations of the Nigerian people because the same old problems of electoral fraud and voting malpractices were widespread. In fact, an attempted arson was reported in Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory.

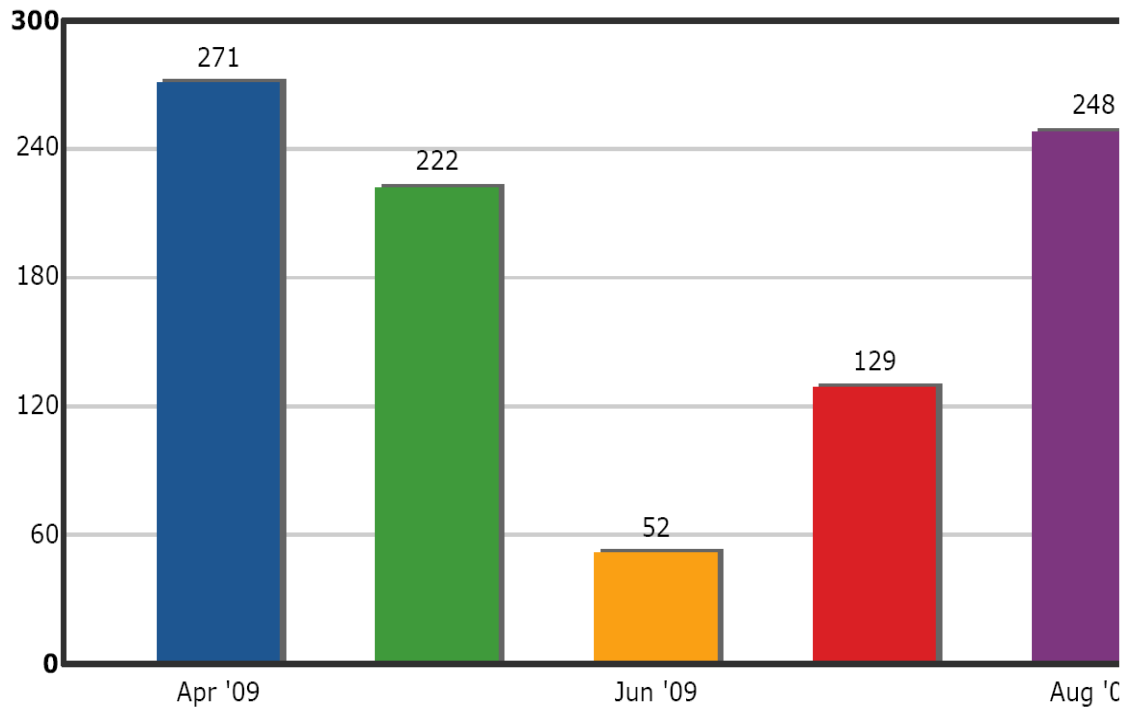
The post-General Elections blogs (which constitute 27.3% of the data) highlight and reflect on several aspects of the entire 2007 electoral process. On 23 April 2007, Funmi Iyanda writes:

[BLOG 09]

So I sit here this morning pensive, it took all of 3 minutes for me to cast my vote on Saturday, 3 minutes. The week before I had stood in line in the sun for two hours, hat and sunglasses firmly on, large bottle of water in hand as resolutely determined as most of my fellow country men to cast my vote. This weekend, the polling booth was a ghost town, my people had lost hope, I voted and left, because I had an access car, I had observed proceeding from the Alimosho area, through Agege, Ikeja, to Maryland and the apathy was palpable.

The Twitter data for this study are 923 tweets from April 16, 2009 to August 31, 2009 with the monthly breakdown as follows:





*Table 12: Monthly Ekiti re-run elections' tweets from April 2009 to August 2009*

The Ekiti re-run Twitter account (<http://twitter.com/ekitirr>) was activated on April 16, 2009 for twittering the electoral developments in the gubernatorial re-run elections (held on April 25 and May 5, 2009) and senatorial re-run election on August 15, 2009 in Ekiti State. It afforded citizens of the State the opportunity to monitor and give on-the-spot eye witness accounts of electoral happenings via mobile phones, mobile web and the standard World Wide Web. It is not surprising that over 200 tweets were recorded in each of the months the re-run elections were held (April, May and August 2009).

Closely linked to our blog and Twitter data by virtue of being electronically-mediated is mobile phone texting. Nigerian *textizens* used the SMS feature of mobile telephony to monitor the 2007 elections. As documented in the report of the Network of Mobile Election Monitors (NMEM), an estimated 11,000 text messages were received from ordinary Nigerians on April 21, 2007 the day of the

presidential election (Banks, 2007). NMEM used a free FrontlineSMS platform to collate all the text messages. Through this mobile service, thousands of ordinarily faceless and voiceless Nigerian masses found a medium to make their voices heard and to express their candid opinions about how the presidential election was conducted. The mobile technology therefore enabled the electorates to also serve as volunteer local observers. This people-powered participation by mobile telephony is mentioned in this study because of its prospects in future general elections.

## **5.5 THE DISCURSIVE CONSTRUCTION OF BOTTOM-UP POWER NEGOTIATION**

Democratic governance is an electoral contract between governors and the governed through free and fair elections because qualified citizens in democratic societies have the constitutional right to elect who leads them. The electorates can also negotiate the terms of governance with political candidates by the choice of who they vote for or against. There is however a procedural modification in the electioneering process of the present day digital society. By using blogging and microblogging tools, electronically-empowered electorates can alter the dynamics of power negotiation when they exploit the user content generation possibilities of Web 2.0 to do pre- and post-election politicking as well as they physically participate by going to the polls. As earlier stated, the technological freedom of expression and opinions which social media promotes has liberalised the pursuit and practice of democracy. All it takes to domesticate digital democracy is to ensure that a higher number of the citizenry is electronically-empowered so that there can be a level playing field between politicians and the electorates they seek political power from.

Since linguistic elements, particularly textual devices, are the main building blocks with which bloggers construct ideals and report events for their audiences we illustrate below how bloggers employ texts to convey sentiments, transmit

ideas, criticize anti-social practices, confront anti-people policies, and proffer plausible solutions (either implicitly or explicitly) to electoral problems in society. The following are selected discursive acts performed by bloggers or associated with blogging and microblogging in this study.

### **5.5.1 BLOGGING AND MICROBLOGGING AS MOBILIZATION**

Weblogs are an influential political tool for mobilization in many parts of the world (Cross, 2005). Nigerian bloggers made good use of this tool to educate, enlighten, and encourage eligible voters to avail themselves of the opportunity to perform their civic duties. Titi Akinsanmi's blog (9 June 2006) outlines how the electorates can be mobilized:

[BLOG 10]

- Register (voters registration) towards expressing our voting rights;
- Convince everyone to register towards expressing their rights;
- Vote for the people of our choice;
- Be ready to "fight" (with the pen, association and other avenues) for a possible stealing of a clear mandate.

Notice the use of directives above as a linguistic construction of pre-election persuasion. The framing of the sentences as a persuasive chain of actions is intended to spur readers to practically do something about the forthcoming elections thereby engaging the electorates to be actively involved in the grassroots political empowerment. Getting registered as voters is the first step electorates take in order to ensure that they are qualified to vote. It is the case that many electorates realize at the eleventh hour that they might not be able to exercise their civic rights at the polls either because of the scarcity of registration materials or as a result of their own procrastination. The mobilization was a continuous process until the elections were held and results announced.

Another concerned blogger (Omodudu, on 12 April 2007) indirectly challenged Nigerians at home to embrace the weblog technology to blog and participate in the elections:

[BLOG 11]

Can blogging do for Nigeria what blogging did for the American elections? Will bloggers use their blogs as a tool for on-the-ground citizen journalism. Will bloggers post, up-to-the minute reports as the elections unfold? Will bloggers at least attempt to thwart the efforts of the individuals who have planned to rig the gubernatorial elections? Will bloggers take pictures and make videos of the pluses and minuses during the elections? Will we stop talking about our cats and shoes for one day, and focus on an issue that will determine how we live our lives in the next for years?

Recognizing the impact blogging has had on American elections, this blogger compelled and mobilized people to join the team of grassroots citizen journalists. First, he acknowledges that the weblog has been a tool in American politics and therefore envisaged its incorporation for the enhancement of democracy in Nigeria provided that Nigerian bloggers can be as committed as American bloggers. Although the discourse is rhetorically interrogative, it is evident that the blogger presupposes that blogging (as a form of citizen journalism) can be a deterrent to autocratic and fraudulent electoral practices.

Similarly, other bloggers advocated a specialized use of blogs by civil society groups:

[BLOG 12]

For civil society groups engaged in voter education... they could incorporate the blog into their efforts and prepare by training up staff and volunteers on how to contribute to the blog before election activities even begin

The post above by Tobias Eigen (12 March 2007) suggests how blogs can be employed in the public enlightenment work of civil society groups. Additionally, the data suggest that most blogging activities took place before the April 14 polls and they were mostly for mobilization-related issues at the grassroots level.

Twitter was also used as a mobilization tool in the 2009 re-rerun elections as can be deduced from the following tweets:

[TWEET 01] Join AC in Ekiti in "Operation Sweep PDP Off" on Wednesday April 22, 2009 as train of Chief Bisi Akande, Ashiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu (8:50 AM Apr 21st from web)

[TWEET 02] Ashiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu, Aremo Olusegun Osoba, Otunba Niyi Adebayo, Governors Raji Fashola, Adams Oshiomhole and Segun Mimiko etc (8:51 AM Apr 21st from web)

[TWEET 03] broom-sweep from Ado to Igede to Awo to Osi to Ido, Ifaki and hold on at Oye, before moving to Ijan and Ise. Come to be part of Change! (8:53 AM Apr 21st from web)

The tweets are composed to have the same mobilizing effect on electorates but unlike the blogs examined so far these tweets are clearly partisan because the name of the main opposition party (AC) and the names of its prominent politicians as well as another ideologically similar politician from another party (i.e. Segun Mimiko) are explicitly mentioned. The party's logo is the image of a broom. Broom is the traditional implement for sweeping floors or removing cobwebs on walls and roofs. With respect to the electoral exercise, the AC party calls on electorates to join in voting out the ruling party (PDP) out of power. If the call is heeded this may result in a change of the status quo.

Many bloggers too claim that their motivation for blogging the elections was because they wanted to break the retrogressive cycle of botched elections in the nation's history. A sizeable number of bloggers did blog because they wanted the electoral exercise to be transparent to the whole world so that the ruling government would be cautious in tampering with the results. Another dimension to the desire for change is the need to make the electorates' votes count towards electing credible office holders. Hence the reason for resorting to using the weblog technology to effect electoral change.

### 5.5.2 PARTICIPATORY POLITICS

The second stage of the power negotiation process by electorates is actual participation by going to the polls. Discursive aspects of the participation we shall mention are the use of verbs, pronouns and a preposition. Let us consider the choice of verbs (in italics) in excerpts of the blogs.

[BLOG 02] Nigerians go to the poll *to elect*

[BLOG 03] The family went out *to vote* this morning. We saw a crowd of  
people ... I ... decided *to*      *vote*

[BLOG 05] I *voted*

[BLOG 07] I *cast my vote*

[BLOG 09] I got there ... I *cast my vote*

The verbal elements "to elect", "to vote", "voted" and "cast vote" specify both the act and goal of going to the polls. These words are reflective of the electorates' sentiments of what the purpose of elections should be: to elect politicians by casting of votes. This is where a distinction is usually drawn between an electoral process and a selection charade when people's votes do not seem to matter. In elections, the will of the majority of the masses is affected but

in selections candidates are forced on the populace often by orchestrated electoral irregularities.

Beginning from the generic reference to Nigerians in BLOG 2 to the definite reference in BLOG 3 there is a progression of referencing from the indefinite to the specific. Not all Nigerians participated in the elections but the family of BLOG 3's writer did. The inclusive plural anaphoric pronoun "we" indicates that. Then the use of the first person pronoun in BLOGs 3, 5, 7 and 9 above highlight the fact that these bloggers were electorates themselves. By casting their votes, these bloggers performed their civic duties and practiced participatory politics. Their participation authenticates the reports provided on their blogs as on-the-ground first-hand information.

Nevertheless, the choice of the wordings of the headlines / sub-headlines of the blogs below expresses skepticism about the event.

[BLOG 13]      **Characteristics of a naija politician**

*sElection 2007 (4 days(state)/11 days(federal) to go)*

*a blog entry on the Nigerian elections in April 2007*

- Ijebuman's Diary (11 April 2007)

[BLOG 14]    **Do or Die "Selections"** - (Funmi Iyanda, 17 April 2007)

[BLOG 09]    **Power From The People** - (Funmi Iyanda, 23 April 2007)

It is instructive to note the contrast between 'elect(ion)' and 'select(ion)' as used in the 2007 Elections context. President Obasanjo was reported to have referred to the electoral contest as a "do-or-die affair"<sup>65</sup> although he was no longer a

---

<sup>65</sup> This expression means that the election was considered as a life-and-death issue. Thus,

contestant. By focusing on the lexical item ‘elect(ion)’ the burden of choice is the responsibility of the electorates, which is the ideal thing in established democracies. The underlying meaning encoded in ‘elect(ion)’ is one which enables the citizens to exercise their fundamental civic rights and make choices of their own. The electorates should be the one to cast votes to decide who governs them. On the other hand, ‘select(ion)’ evokes apathy in the electorates. Cognitively, this is suggestive of a delegated but undesirable shift of responsibility. The electorates are deprived of the cardinal component of democracy while an unelected cabal dictates who governs not necessarily for the common good of the country. Ultimately, the use of ‘elect(ion)’ indicates citizen participation whereas ‘select(ion)’ is indicative of civic deprivation. These two lexical cognates express the mood and attitudes of the electorates towards the 2007 General Elections.

The use of the preposition *from* in BLOG 9 has two renderings. The first is a derivative political power via democratic elections from the electorates, which buttresses the bottom-up approach of grassroots politics and political empowerment. But looking at the entry date of the blog, the reading here is one of depriving citizens the right to exercise their civic power as many electorates were either disenfranchised or refused to go to the polls for the presidential election after the disappointment of how the 14 April 2007 elections were conducted. Additionally, the ruling party’s (PDP) slogan for the election was “Power to the People” but the sentiment expressed by this influential blogger was deprivation and not empowerment as the main party would want the citizenry to believe. Highlighted portions of the body of BLOG 9 tell it all:

This weekend, the polling booth was a ghost town, *my people had lost hope*, ... and *the apathy was palpable*. The streets were empty as boys took

---

everything should be done so that the president's favoured candidates would win at all cost even if the means of doing so is undemocratic.



to the highway playing football. Close monitoring of news reports (galaxy TV was commendable) all day showed that *this was the situation nationwide along with late or non arrival of ballot material and the usual ballot snatching/ stuffing, harassment and intimidation.*

If the power that was meant to be exercised bottom-up is deprived for the majority of the populace, then there is a tendency for political autocracy.

### **5.5.3 BLOGGERS AND TWITTERERS AS WATCHDOGS**

One striking motivation in all the blogs and tweets sampled is the desire of bloggers to serve as monitors in order to forestall or expose electoral irregularities and rigging during the electoral process. Bloggers called for vigilance on the part of the electorates as they themselves went out to observe the conduct of the polls. Some bloggers report that they were enthusiastic about the civic oversight roles they played. The local bloggers in conjunction with a few diaspora Nigerians who acted as ‘foot soldiers’ tried their best to chronicle exactly what happened. The account given in BLOG 8 appears to express the opinions of the majority of the electorates:

It has been a very long day today ... The news coming from around the country is obviously discouraging and is what was expected from *I-MESS*, I mean I-NEC, the electoral body. ... Reports from across the country indicate that the exercise was characterized by low voter turnout

Microblogging the re-rerun elections in 2009 as can be seen in the real-time progressive reporting of events in TWEETS 4 – 15 (see Appendix) was one way of ensuring transparency by committed citizen twitterers:

[TWEET 05] Time 0.40hrs, materials finaly (sic) leave INEC office, Ado-Ekiti.

(5:56 PM Apr 24th from txt)

[TWEET 06] Violence, mayhem as Ekiti rerun kicks off (1:23 AM Apr 25th from web)

[TWEET 11] Poll ends as collations moves to ward level. (8:21 AM Apr 25th from web)

[TWEET 13] Mrs. Ayoka Adebayo announces return of Oni as governor... (1:10 PM May 5th from web)

[TWEET 14] Nigerian activists plan mass protest over Ekiti re-run results...condemn outcome of polls as grave danger for nation's democratic experiment5:51 AM May 10th from web

The monitors' reports complement other citizens' acceptance of the elections as either legitimate or illegitimate. Two words then sum up the discursive power negotiation: *election* and *selection*. Election, if the exercise is deemed free and fair with the emerging political power being a true reflection of voters' choices; selection, if voting irregularities are observed and the will of the majority is not respected.

## **5.6 CONCLUSION**

This chapter presents a variety of discursive acts that the social media affords its users. The thesis of this study is that citizens' access to social media electronically empowers the electorates to be actively involved in negotiating the terms of democratic governance with institutionally empowered politicians and leaders. Electronic empowerment is a direct result of access to social media by more citizens who constitute the electorates. The increasing number of Nigerians with Internet access and mobile telephony subscription means that more and

more previously faceless and voiceless citizens are being electronically empowered. It has been argued that the freedom of expression and opinion which social media and mobile telephony promote have further liberalised the pursuit and practice of democracy. Although social media enables freedom of communication, this does not automatically translate to increased or decreased political participation by eligible voters (Wellman *et al.*, 2001). From the contents of the data presented, many voters lost hope in the Nigerian 2007 electoral process because of the observable flaws mentioned earlier.

Since blogging and microblogging can facilitate civic engagement and political participation (de Zúñiga *et al.*, 2009), this study has placed emphasis on the potential of social media to serve as a supplementary avenue for self expression, a communication medium and a virtual public sphere (Polat, 2005; Quan-Haase *et al.*, 2002; Wellman *et al.*, 2001). Interestingly, the few digitally-connected Nigerians investigated in this study used social media and were also politically active offline.

Nigerian bloggers used the weblog for mobilization. Apart from using the weblog and Twitter for mobilization, there is evidence of the social media being used as well for participatory politics. This has been textually illustrated through the choice of words and sentiments expressed in blog posts and tweets. It was stated that certain verbal elements such as “to elect”, “to vote”, “voted” and “cast vote” specify both the act and goal of going to the polls. These words are reflective of the electorates’ sentiments of what the purpose of elections should be: to elect politicians by casting of votes. This is where a distinction is usually drawn between an electoral process and a selection charade when people’s votes do not seem to matter. In elections, the will of the majority of the masses is affected but in selections candidates are forced on the populace often by orchestrated electoral irregularities. The sentiment expressed by a majority of the online interactants whose blogs and tweets are surveyed for this study is that of viewing the 2007

political process as 'selection'. The choice of words and the tone of the messages contained in the blogs and tweets examined, support the perception of the process as largely antithetical to genuine democracy. Hence, aspirations of change via social media require more offline activities. With respect to the Nigerian 2007 and the Iranian 2009 elections, social media might not have significantly influenced the results of the elections but access to Web 2.0 technologies surely encouraged more public discussions about politics and made the democratic process more dynamic than in the pre-social media era.

The blogosphere and social media in general are technological tools of modern democratic practices when a higher number of the citizenry is electronically-empowered so that there can be a level playing field between politicians and the electorates they seek political power from. Although blogging is a recent phenomenon in politics, its use in the US (2004, 2006 and 2008) and Nigerian (2007) electoral cycles as well as its adoption for the liberalisation of political discourse in Iran suggests that it is likely to continue to be an important avenue for democratic digital discourse. It has been shown that a linguistic analysis of the data reveals that there is a dialectical relationship between discourse and political empowerment. The central prediction of this study therefore is that mobile telephony with Web 2.0 technologies will be invaluable in the 2011 Nigerian general elections

SMS text messaging, blogging and microblogging are poised to be influential for grassroots mobilization, participatory and partisan politics, people-powered monitoring of results and reactions in future elections around the globe.

SELECTED BLOG DATA EXCERPTS

<p>BLOG 01</p>	<p>Chippa Vandu's Weblog  8 January 2005</p>	<p>Considering the incredible difficulty associated with conducting free and fair elections in the complex and multi-ethnic entity called Nigeria where allegiances are so diverse, it will definitely be a good idea if the United Nations or some third party nation could be fully responsible for organizing the next Nigerian presidential election. Otherwise, free and fair elections in Nigeria may remain a thing for the distant future.</p>
<p>BLOG 02</p>	<p>Aderemi Ojikutu's People's Arena 14 April 2007</p>	<p>Today, Nigerians go to the poll to elect governors for her 36 States, and her state legislators. It would be an opportunity once again, to avenge the last 4 years of recklessness and brigandage by corrupt politicians.</p> <p>It would be the first civilian to civilian transition, as President Obasanjo is bound by the constitution to vacate the 'throne' for a new president, after 8 years of benevolent dictatorship and economic sloppiness.</p>
<p>BLOG 03</p>	<p>Ore's Notes 14 April 2007</p>	<p>The family went out to vote this morning. We saw a crowd of people at the Tantalizers near our place and pulled in there. Once there, we found out that there were different polling booths and that we were not all registered to vote in the same place. After returning home to get separate cars, we went back out again. I returned to the Tantalizers as that was my place to vote. And then the long wait began. I chided myself for not getting there earlier, but I heard from people who had been there at 8AM, as instructed, that the INEC officials had not yet arrived at that time.</p> <p>...</p> <p>I don't know too much about the candidates for the state assembly, but decided to vote for the same party as my gubernatorial choice. The governorship forms displayed the names and photos of the candidates, as well as their party's emblem. I scanned for Jimi Agbaje's photo but could not find it. It took me a minute to eventually find his name.</p>
<p>BLOG 04</p>	<p>Yomi Says Blog 14 April 2007</p>	<p>Up till now (11.15am), polling officers are yet to arrive at many polling stations. At other stations where polling has started, there are reports of shortage of materials.</p> <p>It doesn't look good. As usual, this leaves good room for malpractices. In the past, this has resulted in a situation where legitimate voters get tired and leave and pre-completed ballot papers are presented for counting at the end of the day.</p> <p>Whether this delay is deliberate or merely a logistics problem from INEC, it leaves a lot to be desired.</p>
<p>BLOG 05</p>	<p>Purpose Driven Blog 17 April 2007</p>	<p>Elections started around 10 a.m but I was ready to go a-voting by 12 noon. I went to the voting poll centre (oh nothing grand, more like under a tree as you can see in the photos!) with my aunt and a friend and the queue was so long! It was as if everyone decided they would come out to vote by 12. We were actually at the tail end of the queue. After standing on the same spot on the queue for 5 mins I began to wonder if voting was really worth my time. Lol...I really wasn't willing to stand on that motionless queue forever. My aunt and friend concurred with me so we decided to go back home not before reserving our space on the queue. We asked/begged/pleaded with some guy we knew on the queue to save our spaces. (I am not sure why but I felt I would be sinning if I didn't vote hehehe).</p>

		<p>Oh yes, I voted for Jimi Agbaje ("Do you want same of the same Or Jimi Agbaje") ...</p> <p>But really were the election results really fair and free like they claim? I wonder what will happen next week as per presidential elections and results.</p>
BLOG 06	David Ajao 18 April 2007	<p>It's election time in Africa's most populous country - Nigeria. Nigerian bloggers have been blogging their sentiments and observations of the election. This round-up gives a brief overview of election reports and views shared by Nigerian bloggers before, during and after last Saturday's gubernatorial election.</p>
BLOG 07	Tayo Odukoya 21 April 2007	<p>Today is the day many people have been waiting for. It's the day of the Presidential Elections in Nigeria, and hopefully the day in which the fate of Nigeria's future will be changed, for better. I just returned from the election booth (if it can be called a booth) some minutes ago. It was the same place where I registered to vote a few months ago. It took two minutes from the time I got there to the time I cast my vote, and that was it ... yes it was as simple as that. Here are my observations.</p> <p>The first observation was that the voting spot was quite devoid of people.</p> <p>My voter's card was marked with an X, my name was ticked in the register, I was given the ballot papers and told to proceed to an isolated table in a corner some distance away. I opened the ballot papers and ALAS! I made another observation. There were no names on the papers. All that existed were party names. Although this had earlier been announced by the INEC (for reasons probably not unrelated to the Imo state gubernatorial election saga), I was still caught aback.</p> <p>There have been reports of people absconding with ballot boxes (bags) and some disturbances here and there. Also, this morning there was an attempted sabotage on the INEC office in Abuja. Thankfully, it failed.</p> <p>The next few days will probably be a beehive of activities and post-election drama.</p>
BLOG 08	Adaure Achumba 21 April 2007	<p>It has been a very long day today and honestly, I have decided, since the ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP) has already concluded the manner in which this election will turn out and therefore voted for me, my ancestors and my unborn children (sic), that I deserve to take the rest of the day off, take a long cold shower, a hefty mound of pounded yam and <i>ogbono</i> soup and sleep until Sunday morning. The news coming from around the country is obviously discouraging and is what was expected from <i>I-MESS</i>, I mean I-NEC, the electoral body. Which brings me to the subject of disorganization. When will Nigeria and Nigerians get organized. Everything is a problem, a fight, <i>big-big wahala</i>. <i>Census na kwanta</i>, Voters registration the same thing, <i>election sef na by the miracle of God we have am</i>.</p> <p>Voting in Saturday's presidential and national assembly elections ended in many parts of the country at 5pm. Reports from across the country indicate that the exercise was characterized by low voter turn-out.</p> <p>INEC Chairman, Professor MAURICE IWU, is describing Saturday's elections as satisfactory despite some hitches experienced in many States.</p> <p>Security has been beefed up at the INEC headquarters in Abuja following an attempt</p>

		to blow it up this morning with petrol tanker allegedly filled with explosives (emphasis in italics added: loan words and Nigerian Pidgin clauses).
BLOG 09	Funmi Iyanda 23 April 2007	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Power From The People</b></p> <p>So I sit here this morning pensive, it took all of 3 minutes for me to cast my vote on Saturday, 3 minutes. The week before I had stood in line in the sun for two hours, hat and sunglasses firmly on, large bottle of water in hand as resolutely determined as most of my fellow country men to cast my vote. This weekend, the polling booth was a ghost town, my people had lost hope, I voted and left, because I had an access car, I had observed proceeding from the Alimosho area, through Agege, Ikeja, to Maryland and the apathy was palpable. The streets were empty as boys took to the highway playing football. Close monitoring of news reports (galaxy TV was commendable) all day showed that this was the situation nationwide along with late or non arrival of ballot material and the usual ballot snatching/ stuffing, harassment and intimidation.</p>
BLOG 10	Titi Akinsanmi 9 June 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Register (voters registration) towards expressing our voting rights;</li> <li>- Convince everyone to register towards expressing their rights;</li> <li>- Vote for the people of our choice;</li> <li>- Be ready to "fight" (with the pen, association and other avenues) for a possible stealing of a clear mandate.</li> </ul>
BLOG 11	Omodudu 12 April 2007	Can blogging do for Nigeria what blogging did for the American elections? Will bloggers use their blogs as a tool for on-the-ground citizen journalism. Will bloggers post, up-to-the minute reports as the elections unfold? Will bloggers at least attempt to thwart the efforts of the individuals who have planned to rig the gubernatorial elections? Will bloggers take pictures and make videos of the pluses and minuses during the elections? Will we stop talking about our cats and shoes for one day, and focus on an issue that will determine how we live our lives in the next for years?
BLOG 12	Tobias Eigen 12 March 2007	For civil society groups engaged in voter education... they could incorporate the blog into their efforts and prepare by training up staff and volunteers on how to contribute to the blog before election activities even begin
BLOG 13	Ijebuman's Diary 11 April 2007	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Characteristics of a naija politician</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>sElection 2007 (4 days(state)/11 days(federal) to go)</i> <i>a blog entry on the Nigerian elections in April 2007</i></p>
BLOG 14	Funmi Iyanda 17 April 2007	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Do or Die "Selections"</b></p>

#### SELECTED TWITTER DATA EXCERPTS

TWEET 01	Join AC in Ekiti in "Operation Sweep PDP Off" on Wednesday April 22, 2009 as train of Chief Bisi Akande, Ashiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu (8:50 AM Apr 21st from web)
TWEET 02	Ashiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu, Aremo Olusegun Osoba, Otunba Niyi Adebayo, Governors Raji Fashola, Adams Oshiomhole and Segun Mimiko etc (8:51 AM Apr 21st from web)
TWEET 03	broom-sweep from Ado to Igede to Awo to Osi to Ido, Ifaki and hold on at Oye, before moving to Ijan

	and Ise. Come to be part of Change! (8:53 AM Apr 21st from web)
TWEET 04	Inec materials arrive Ekiti ..collation to be carried out near Ado Prison or the Cultural Centre Sat'day evening rather than INEC Center? (9:47 AM Apr 24th from web)
TWEET 05	Time 0.40hrs, materials finally leave INEC office, Ado-Ekiti. (5:56 PM Apr 24th from txt)
TWEET 06	Violence, mayhem as Ekiti rerun kicks off (1:23 AM Apr 25th from web)
TWEET 07	Elections disrupted in Egbe/Iro Ward of Gbonyin LGA (3:33 AM Apr 25th from web)
TWEET 08	Voters resist police and INEC from rigging at University campus base polling unit (4:09 AM Apr 25th from web)
TWEET 09	Elections in Omuo-Oke so far peaceful. (6:01 AM Apr 25th from web)
TWEET 10	At Ilawe, there was argument in d morning but was resolved. Voting now going on well. (6:10 AM Apr 25th from txt)
TWEET 11	Poll ends as collations moves to ward level. (8:21 AM Apr 25th from web)
TWEET 12	State collation of elections to occur at Christ's Girls School Chapel (10:16 AM Apr 25th from mobile web)
TWEET 13	Mrs. Ayoka Adebayo announces return of Oni as governor.... (1:10 PM May 5th from web)
TWEET 14	Nigerian activists plan mass protest over Ekiti re-run results...condemn outcome of polls as grave danger for nation's democratic experiment5:51 AM May 10th from web
TWEET 15	Final Ekiti rerun result: Arise (PDP) ~36,000; Adetunmbi (AC)~17,000. Results announced at 2am; no media allowed into Collation Center.2:47 AM Aug 16th from txt



## CHAPTER 6

### TWITTER AND THE 2009 RE-RUN ELECTIONS IN NIGERIA

Discourse as a political practice establishes, sustains and changes power relations, and the collective entities (classes, blocs, communities, groups) between which power relations obtain. Discourse as an ideological practice constitutes, naturalizes, sustains and changes significations of the world from diverse positions in power relations - Fairclough (1992).

The absence of enabling conditions for democratic participation at the grassroots is the greatest obstacle to democracy in Africa, just as the transformation of society for the empowerment of ordinary people is the greatest challenge of democratization - Ake (1993).

#### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

Going by the theoretical concerns and explanatory exigency of this study, relevant aspects of speech acts theory (SAT) (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969) are fused with critical discourse analysis (CDA) for the construction of our data-derived, election-oriented, politico-pragmatic tweet acts, in terms of what we call Good Governance Maxims (GGM). GGMs are the commonly held democratic values and ideals. In other words, they are the democratic governance benchmarks (UNESCAP, n.d.; World Bank, 1989, 1992, 2010). We categorize these into five: *participation* (including consensus-building and inclusiveness); *transparency*; *accountability*; *social justice* (including rule of law and equity); and *effectiveness* (including efficiency and responsiveness).

SAT was initially developed by Austin (1962) and reformulated by Searle (1969, 1979). It is the Searlean re-classification that is used in this study. The thesis of SAT is that *saying* or *writing* a piece of language is *doing things with words* and as such it describes the *acts* language use perform or what utterances do in communicative interactions when all necessary conditions are met. An utterance has both a propositional content (meaning) and an illocutionary force (pragmatic function) (Searle, 1969); and in the performance of a speech act, the speaker / writer relates in a certain way the propositional content to the context of the

utterance so as to determine a direction of fit between language and the world (Vanderveken, 1998). The five basic speech acts in English are stated below:

Type	Illocutionary point	Meta-performative verb	Examples
Assertives	Commits the speaker to representing as actual the state of affairs	'assert'	Asserting, statement
Commissives	Commits the speaker to some future course of action	'commit'	Promise, offer
Directives	Attempt by the speaker to get the hearer to do something	–	Command, request
Declarations	Performing actions which bring into existence and effect changes in the state of affairs	'declare'	Christening, nullification
Expressives	Expresses a psychological state, especially the speaker's propositional attitudes	–	Greeting, apologies

It is noteworthy that Searle (1969:70) acknowledges that “one and the same utterance may constitute several different illocutionary acts” thus making more than one speech act to be accomplished by a simple single utterance as in the example of a wife at a party who says to the husband: “It's really quite late”. This is primarily an assertive (stating a fact) and indirectly a directive (a suggestion / request for them to go home).

The ‘technologization of discourse’ coined by Norman Fairclough is the ‘calculated intervention to shift discursive practices as part of the engineering of social change’ (1995:3) anchored on a three-dimensional framework (i.e. text, discourse practice and sociocultural practice) of CDA to explicate the processes of text production, distribution and consumption with the aim of facilitating real

social change in human society (Fairclough, 1995). An instantiation of these processes in microblogging is :

[production → composing a tweet]

[distribution → sending it to “followers” or specified recipients prefaced by the @ symbol or to a trending topic preceded by the hashtag # or to just any anticipated audiences ]

[consumption → reading it and maybe sending replies]

According to the Faircloughian CDA, “any discursive event necessarily positions itself in relation to ... historical legacy, selectively reproducing or transforming it” and usually “discourse practice ensures attention to the historicity of discursive events by showing both their continuity with the past ... and their involvement in making history” (Fairclough, 1995: 10-11). This indicates, as we argued earlier, that there exists *a heterogenous discursive practice of interaction and intersection* in text production, dissemination and consumption among writers, textual utterances and readers. Therefore, making meaning out of a text or discourse is based on a network of prior, concurrent and anticipated discursive events which translate into a dialectical relationship between language and society. Operating intertextually, it bridges between current and previous texts, current and previous themes or topics, current and previous discursive practices, and current and previous societal occurrences. Another dimension of historicity is the relevance of discursive events to interactants. For Nigerian netizens, the use of Twitter for campaigning in the 2009 re-runs is historic, that politicians and ordinary people's views can be evaluated side by side through microblogging is historic, and the very act of twitterers doubling as watchdogs is indeed historic. The Twitter data for this part of the study are 909 tweets<sup>66</sup> from April 16, 2009 to August 31, 2009 which are the election-oriented tweets composed before, during and after the re-run elections in 2009.

---

<sup>66</sup> This is the total after discarding those that are not related to the elections in any way.

## 6.2 THE POLITICO-PRAGMATIC FORCE OF ELECTION-ORIENTED TWEET ACTS

New linguistic data with medium-specific features may pose analytical challenges to an existing theory of language use and in some cases a refinement or re-application of theories may be necessary (Androutsopoulos and Beißwenger, 2008; Hinrichs, 2006; Sebba, 2009b). In the context of electioneering and electoral processes, linguistic communication involves not only linguistic but socio-political acts too (Pocock, 1973; Searle, 1969). Twittering is a discursive means to inform readers of events as they happen, to bond with like-minded people or with readers of same ideological orientation, to challenge undemocratic practices, or to propagate good governance maxims. A parallel can be drawn between instances of language use in public discourse and twittering. That is, words in a public sphere are either said to be heard or written to be read in order to forge a cognitive or intellectual interaction between the speaker / writer and the listener / reader. Tweets are thus dialogic (in the Bakhtinian sense)<sup>67</sup> because publicly accessible tweets are primarily composed to be read and then, if possible, to evoke responses from readers or anticipated audiences. Therefore the schema in Table 15 is a data-driven taxonomy of political 'tweet acts' in the context of an electoral process.

ACT		Description
Progressive Publishing	– Poetic Precis	140-character locution; alphanumeric and rebus abbreviations; acronyms
	– Public sphere Plurilingualism	Combination of linguistic elements from at least two languages or linguistic systems
Pre-election Persuasions	– Promptings	Motivating electorates for civic engagement, voters registration etc;
	– Partisan Polemics	Mobilization for political participation;

<sup>67</sup> This is non-trivially implicit in microblogs because by the reading of tweets there is a “conversational interaction” between the twitterer and the reader, and a negotiation of meaning (of what the former intends to be communicated and what the latter eventually interprets the tweets to mean).

		Campaigns
Performance Predictions	– Pundits' Projections – Exit polls	All speculative stance and projections until actual election results are announced
Participatory Polling		Politicians and electorates as citizens fulfilling their civic obligations and simultaneously serving as volunteer monitors
Post-poll Perceptions	– Polling problems – Protests	Reports on the conduct of elections, evaluations of voters' verdict, the credibility of the electoral process and its aftermath
Political Power	– 'Performative' pronouncements	Declarations that empower winners to exercise electoral mandate

Table 13: *A taxonomy of political tweet acts*

However, Table 14 is the tripartite heuristics for our data analysis.

Basic Illocutionary Types	Discourse Acts	Good Governance Maxims
Assertives (ASS)	E.g. alert, caution,	Participation (PART) Transparency (TRAN) Accountability (ACCT) Justice (JUS) Effectiveness (+, – EFF)
Commissives (COMM)	congratulation (congrat),	
Directives (DIR)	disagreement (disagree),	
Declarations (DEC)	empowerment (power),	
Expressives (EXP)	evaluation (evaluate), greeting, informative (inform), invitation (invite), invocation, opine, pun, reaction (react), request etc.	

Table 14: *The politico-pragmatic force of our tweets data*

The textual pattern, discursive and sociocultural practices of selected political tweets are described, interpreted and explained accordingly.

### 6.2.1 ASSERTIVES

Now let us explain the data. Tweet (2) is a statement informing readers of the action of diasporan Nigerians in the UK as part of their involvement in the electoral process back home. “June 12” has become a historical and political slogan for the zenith of autocracy in Nigeria because on June 12 1993, Nigeria conducted what is considered the freest and fairest general elections on Nigerian soil but which were scuttled by the military and this led to public unrest and eventual loss of lives. The 1993 Presidential Election was annulled by the then military President Ibrahim Babangida. So, by referring to it, it suggests a localization of the militarization of democracy in Ekiti State. Civil protests are a part of political transformation in democratization.

From Tweet (3) the unpleasant sight of women protesting half-nude goes to show that the people of Ekiti felt cheated by the manner in which the April 25, 2009 rerun was conducted. Nude protests by women (especially the aged ones) is the height of non-violent protests by the citizenry among the Ekiti people. Usually, people's demands are met by rulers after such protests. The composer of the message informs readers of this participation by protest in the electoral process. Tweets (4) and (5) are meant to inform as well but whereas (4) depicts the participatory and transparency maxims of good governance, (5) relays Fayemi's opinion about fraudulent practices in the rerun and the inefficiency of the officers tasked with the responsibility of executing the election. In Tweet (6), just like (5), the inefficiency of the electoral commission is highlighted. Tweet (7) is an interesting instance of public sphere plurilingualism. It draws a humorous contrast between the outcomes of democracy in Ghana and Nigeria (Ekiti) by playing on the name of American President “Obama” who was on a state visit to Ghana then because Ghana has come to represent the example of a responsible African governance and democracy whereas “àbámò” a Yoruba word for regret is what Ekiti people got after going to the poll. Same actions by the electorates but different results. On the part of the electoral commission, it is another display of

the commission's inefficiency. Like (7), (8) contains expressions in English and Yoruba. The Yoruba portion means the fruit of hard labour is satisfying and enduring. The writer is hopeful of justice being done in the long run and this is an implicit encouragement to the politicians.

No.	Tweet	Classification
2	Nigerians in UK protest "June 12" in Ekiti11:58 AM Apr 29th from web	<ASS, inform, PART>
3	Hundreds of half-naked women protest in Ado-Ekiti, the Ekiti State capital today 29th April12:38 PM Apr 29th from web	<ASS, inform, PART>
4	Monitoring in Ward 2: Honorable Adewale from Emure says turnout is low, no attempt to hijack; has walked thru 11 units out of 19 in ward4:58 AM May 5th from web	<ASS, inform, PART   TRAN>
5	Fayemi addresses d press; says Ido/Osi's result is fraudulent & cannot hold.5:29 AM May 6th from txt	<ASS, inform   opine, - EFF>
6	COSEG describes Ekiti rerun as "desecration of democratic principles"; says Iwu's incompetent to conduct free, fair and credible elections2:08 AM May 15th from web	<ASS, inform   opine, - EFF>
7	"Obama in Ghana, abamo (regrets) in Nigeria" -- Ekiti protesters.3:50 AM May 26th from txt	<ASS, pun, - EFF>
8	"An adage says OHUN AJIYA FUN LONPE LOWO ENI AND after darkness, dia shall be light.We luv u & ur soft-spoken ability wit boldness"Lekan Ojo7:59 PM Aug 2nd from TweetDeck	<ASS, opine, JUS>
9	DECLARED RESULTS [Ward] – (AC)(PDP): Iludun I (92)(194); Iludun II (86)(147); Ewu (81)(244); Iye I (179)(206); Iye II (183)(182)9:10 AM Aug 15th from web	<ASS, inform, TRAN>
10	Election went well in Ire-Ekiti, Itapa-Ekiti and Osin-Ekiti wards but there was report of ballot box snatching in Oye wards I & II.10:32 AM Aug 15th from txt	<ASS, inform   opine, EFF>

Tweets (9) and (10) are statements of facts from the writers' point of view meant to inform the reading public of how transparent and effective the conduct of the

rerun and declaration of results were in the parts of Ekiti mentioned.

### 6.2.2 COMMISSIVES

The data in this category express the commitment of the agents in the discourse to some future actions. For instance in (11), members of the main opposition party (Action Congress) state their intention to reject any results declared by another Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC) apart from the female commissioner who supervised the disputed rerun. This is meant to enforce the governance principle of accountability and responsibility. For Tweet (12), a human rights activist stresses his commitment to visiting the State as frequently as the needs might arise to see things for himself first-hand even though his life has been under serious threat as a result of his call for transparency and effectiveness of the electoral process. Doing so, makes him accountable as an activist and shows that he is indeed committed to the course of democratization in Ekiti.

No.	Tweet	Classification
11	AC: We won't accept results declared by alternative REC2:57 AM Apr 29th from web	<COMM, disagree, ACCT>
12	Momoh vows to return to Ekiti as many times as need be. Declares: "I am a patriot"3:00 AM Apr 29th from web	<COMM, react, ACCT>
13	Subversn of pples' rights to vote their leader is a violent act & it's justifiable if d pple meet dat violence with more violence. --WS11:05 AM Apr 30th from web	<COMM, opine, - EFF>
14	O sure ju! OSUN&EKITI MST BE LIBERATED.I"M OSUN BY BIRTH,EKITI BY MARRIAGE!SO,I'VE 2 PRAY HARD 4 THESE 2 STATES CLOSE 2 MY HRT~Ibk Adepeju11:24 PM Aug 27th from HootSuite	<COMM, opine, ACCT>
15	"Sir al I knw is dat 1day ur stolen mandate wil b restore.I pray 4 u day&night, I won't rest until ur stolen mandate is restored"~Remi	<COMM, opine, JUS>



	Alade9:39 PM Aug 31st from HootSuite	
16	we've bn praying 4 yr victory @ d tribunal&we'll cont 2pray 4U dnt B discouragd by d seemingly delay in d whole struggle,dlay is nevr a denial8:03 PM Aug 28th from TweetDeck	<COMM, opine, JUS>
17	Nigerian activists plan mass protest over Ekiti re-run results...condemn outcome of polls as grave danger for nation's democratic experiment5:51 AM May 10th from web	<COMM, inform, PART>

Tweet (13) is a reported text of Wole Soyinka's words. The opinion expressed is a veiled threat to deter the ruling government from violating the civic rights of the citizenry. It criticizes the inefficiency of the electoral commission. There is another instance of codeswitching in (14). The first sentence “O sure ju!” (translated: “It's certain!”) is a mixture of Yoruba and English foregrounding the writer's belief in electoral justice in the two States (Ondo and Ekiti) she hails from. She commits herself to praying until electoral democracy becomes a reality in the two states. It is a commitment indicating that she holds herself accountable for praying democracy into reality. Like (14), the twitterer of (15) states her belief in justice and commits herself to doing anything she could until the stolen mandate is restored to the rightful winner. Tweet (16) expresses similar commitment as (14) and (15). In Tweet (17), readers are informed about the intention of Nigerian activists to protest the results of elections they regard as highly flawed.

### 6.2.3 DIRECTIVES

Directives, by their form and force, prompt readers to carry out certain actions. Tweet (18) invites readers and electorates to be politically integrated into the AC fold. The tweet is clearly partisan. The party's logo is the image of a broom. Broom is the traditional implement for sweeping floors or removing cobwebs on walls and roofs. With respect to the electoral exercise, the AC party calls on electorates to join in voting out the ruling party (PDP) out of power. If the call is

heeded this may result in a change of the status quo. Tweet (19) evokes the imagery of “June 12” already commented on in (2) above. It is a caution against the repetition of the anti-democratic practice of the past and a call for effectiveness and responsiveness. Similarly, (20) is both a threat as well as a request for adequate security for the female INEC commissioner who had played the religious card on CAN. Moreover, it is a call on the government to carry out its constitutional function of protecting life and property. Whereas the call to the government in (20), Tweet (21) contains an admonition to the entire citizenry of Ekiti to desist from heating up the polity unnecessarily. There is also a pun using the State's slogan “Fountain of Knowledge”.

No.	Tweet	Classification
18	Join AC in Ekiti in "Operation Sweep PDP Offf" on Wednesday April 22, 2009 as train of Chief Bisi Akande, Ashiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu,8:50 AM Apr 21st from web	<DIR, invite, PART>
19	Afenifere, UAD warns against 'June 12' in Ekiti State2:41 AM Apr 28th from web	<DIR, caution, EFF>
20	The Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) warns FGN not to allow anything happen to Mrs Adebayo. Calls for additional protection for her.5:16 AM Apr 30th from web	<DIR, request, EFF>
21	Former Gov of old Western Region, Maj-Gen Adeyinka Adebayo (Rtd) appeals: Don't turn Ekiti into "Fountain of Fire".12:23 AM May 15th from web	<DIR, request, ACCT>
22	Watch out as Appeal Court sitting at Ilorin gives judgement today in the election petition of Ayo Arise (PDP) vs Olubunmi Adetumbi (AC).11:16 PM Jul 7th from web	<DIR, alert, JUS>
23	Ekiti PDP Should Stop Misinforming the Public says Ekiti AC <a href="http://bit.ly/wBHWG3">http://bit.ly/wBHWG3</a> :35 PM Jul 22nd from web	<DIR, inform   request, ACCT>
24	"Say it to the righteous,that it shall be well with him.....bless you Sir."~Stephen Tunde Oyewusi10:22 PM Aug 7th from TweetDeck	<DIR, invocation, JUS>
25	"Sir we need life feeds of d election.early reports 4rm ur website nd AIT indicates PDP has startd their mess. Is all well now?"~Esan	<DIR, request, TRAN>

	Dipo6:50 PM Aug 16th from web	
--	-------------------------------	--

Tweet (22) is an alert to readers and electorates on the impending enforcement of the rule of law by the Court of Appeal while (23) gives information about the allegation that PDP (the then ruling party in Ekiti) was on a propaganda mission, and thus requested to be responsible to the citizenry and accountable in governance. There is invocation and an expression of belief in social justice in (24) and (25) is a request for live reports in order to engender transparency.

#### 6.2.4 DECLARATIONS

The illocutionary force of declarations correlates the propositional content of an utterance in this category to reality in a cause – effect manner. That is, the successful performance of a declaration guarantees that the proposition corresponds to the state of affairs in the world (Searle, 1969). Therefore in Tweet (26) the constitutional power of the presidency is employed by the mere utterance of the President's words. Depending on who is listening or reading: to the general reading public / listener, it is a piece of information about what will definitely follow but for the INEC commissioner, it is a command. In the same vein, (27) is an issuance of arrest which indicates that there is institutional effectiveness on the part of the police force while (28) is a declaration that empowers a winner to exercise electoral mandate.

No.	Tweet	Classification
26	Yar'Adua orders INEC to announce a definite date for Oye elections. Pray, the president has shown that he has vested interest in Ekiti.10:09 AM Apr 28th from web	<DEC, inform   request, EFF>
27	InspectorGeneral of Police Okiro declares Ekiti REC Ayoka Adebayo wanted to come and substantiate her allegations of results fixing10:54 AM Apr 28th from mobile web	<DEC, inform   request, EFF>
28	Mrs. Ayoka Adebayo announces return of Oni as governor....1:10	<DEC, power, EFF>

	PM May 5th from web	
29	Appeal Court declares Mr Bode Festus Ola as duly elected Senator for Ekiti Central Senatorial district. Removes PDP's Adefemi Kila.3:06 AM Jun 30th from web	<DEC, power, JUS>
30	"Go back and seek your people's legitimate mandate". Appeal Court sitting at Ilorin nullifies election of Senator Ayo Arise.6:08 AM Jul 8th from web	<DEC, power, EFF>

Tweets (29) and (30) contain declarations that instantly change occupiers of public offices. The rule of law is enforced in both cases and the effectiveness of the judiciary is portrayed.

#### 6.2.5 EXPRESSIVES

The majority of tweets in this study belong to this class. This is not surprising because in a technologically-enhanced medium for freedom of expression like microblogs, people find it easy to express their psychological states and sentiments about the practice and problems of electoral democracy in Nigeria. The freedom of expression also translates into the “freedom to switch” languages as done in Tweets (31), (32), (34) and (35). Phatic facework (Goffman, 1955) is also a common feature here. All but (35) are switching involving English and Yoruba. Yoruba is the major indigenous language in Ekiti as well as the mother tongue of most of the inhabitants. The alternation in (35) is from Nigerian Pidgin to English and it appears that the writer and Dr. Fayemi have been colleagues before.

No.	Tweet	Classification
31	"Excelon,dis is anoda victory 4 democracy.Ire na a kari o.We all ave cause to rejoice wit u as d eegun nla tin keyin igbale."~Lanre Olaoba9:45 AM Jul 1st from web	<EXP, congrat, JUS>
32	"e kaa ro o! my gov in waiting...d road may seem long...bt not longer dan we started.we'll live 2 c d emancipatn of	<EXP, greet   opine, JUS>

	ekiti."~Olukayode Thomas2:04 AM Jul 14th from web	
33	"I just feel I should let u know that the pple of Ekiti believe in u. We need the Light to be Right!"~Deacon Festus Ajayi6:06 AM Jul 18th from web	<EXR, opine, EFF>
34	E ku ise o It's sad to know that this PDP and its cohorts have not changed as exhibited last saturday in the re-run~Goke Aiyegbusi8:33 AM Aug 21st from web	<EXR, greeting   evaluate, - EFF>
35	How u dey? Hope things're gradually returning to normal. My prayers with you. Hope you remember me from Unilag....History dept."~Supo Ladipo10:25 AM Aug 27th from web	<EXR, greeting, - EFF>
36	4 God so luv Ekiti ple dat He chose u as leader, He'll surely shw Ekt ple dat He is God of justice&will neva fail.Ekt ple'r 4 gud governance10:50 PM Aug 27th from TweetDeck	<EXR, opine   invocation, JUS>

Tweet (36) contains a religious allusion as well as an invocation for justice and good governance in Ekiti.

From the foregoing, it has been discursively explicated that tweets are a product of discourse, socio-political and cultural practices. They are produced, disseminated and consumed (or read) by netizens who believe in the tenets of good governance. At least, the textual evidence in the paper shows that it is the aspiration of the Nigerian electorates for democracy to be better practised and for more opportunities for effective governance in Nigeria.

### 6.3 CONCLUSION

Nigerian governance indicators are currently rated poorly but there are statutory and legal provisions in the country for engendering democratization. Thus, the agitation for a resourceful, people-oriented and efficient governance in Nigeria is indeed possible through credible elections, altruistic public service and adherence to the rule of law with an independent, unbiased, non-corrupt and fearless

judiciary. The tenets of electoral and participatory democracy are an informed, empowered and engaged citizenry with a vibrant civil society. The people of Ekiti State can look back today (as of October 31, 2010) that their past agitations (since April 2007 through August 2009) for the enthronement of democracy and good governance have yielded results. They can relish in the verdict of the Court of Appeal in Ilorin, Kwara State on October 15, 2010 validating the gubernatorial candidate of the Action Congress of Nigeria, Fayemi Kayode, as the rightful winner of the April 2007 election and April 2009 re-run. As more Nigerians make use of the technological affordances of online public sphere (Castells, 2008), democratization in Nigeria will be solidified through electronically-enhanced dialogue between public officials and the ordinary Nigerians. The paper has discursively illustrated the belief of Nigerian netizens in digital democracy and the principles of good governance. In conclusion, the illocutionary forces of several politico-pragmatic acts via Twitter have been described and characterised.

# Part IV

## CHAPTER 7

### INTERPRETATION OF QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY RESULTS

Questionnaires are still widely used where there is a need to collect quickly a large amount of easily processible data ... As Chambers (1994) notes, one major advantage of using written surveys is their efficiency. They allow researchers to gather data from a large number of speakers in a relatively brief amount of time.

(Milroy & Gordon, 2003:14, 52)

#### 7.1 QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY RESULTS

The questionnaire survey comprises 30 questions divided into three sections. Section A (Questions 1-11) elicits data on respondents' gender, age group, ethnicity, literacy in Nigerian languages and Pidgin, medium and means of Internet access, and SMS texting practices. In Section B (Questions 12-20), respondents report on their activities in the new and social media. Section C is sub-divided into two parts: Questions 21-23 examine the typographic choices in respondents' digital communication; and Questions 24-30 evaluate respondents' assessments of phonological variation (and language crossing) in Nigerian English Accent(s). SPSS, a statistical software, is used for the processing and analysis of 1,154 copies of the completed questionnaire.

We should mention that all the typographic variables tested in the survey are not artificially constructed. They are indeed empirical instances of language use culled from informal Nigerian electronic discourse mentioned in Chapter 2 under data composition. Surveys of this kind are advocated in sociolinguistic CMC research through a blend of on- and offline ethnography for “the observation of Internet use in offline social spaces” (Androutsopoulos, 2006:424). Details of the results are as presented below following the numbering on the questionnaire.



### 7.1.1 BIO-DATA, INTERNET ACCESS AND SMS TEXTING

Questions 1-11 provide data on respondents' gender, age group, ethnicity, literacy in Nigerian languages with Pidgin, medium and means of Internet access, and SMS texting practices.

**Q1 Gender**

	Frequency	%
Male	599	51.9
Female	555	48.1
Total	1154	100.0

Out of the total 1,154 respondents, 51.9% of them are males and females are 48.1%. Question 2 refers to the age groups of the respondents. Teenagers (ages 13-19) constitute 15.5 % of the study population while young adults from ages 20-29 are 78% and people from age 30 and above are 6.5%. The majority of Nigerian undergraduates fall under the 20-29 age range. Therefore, the dominant demography here is representative of the Nigerian youth in institutions of higher learning.

**Q2 Age Groups**

	Frequency	%
13-19	179	15.5
20-24	629	54.5
25-29	271	23.5
30-34	47	4.1
35-39	19	1.6
40 and above	9	.8
Total	1154	100.0

In Question 3 we have the spread of respondents according to their States of origin which is actually not a significant variable because in a State like Rivers, there can be over 10 ethnic groups represented therein (Adegbija, 2004). This is why ethnic grouping in Question 4 is a more relevant variable for the analysis than state of origin.

**Ethnic Group**

	Frequency	%
Hausa	25	2.2
Igbo	289	25.0
Yoruba	790	68.5
others	50	4.3
Total	1154	100.0

People of Yoruba descent are more than a half of the respondents (68.5%) which reflects the ethnic enrollment demography in most Nigerian federal tertiary institutions. Igbos comprise 25% whereas people of Hausa ethnic affiliation are only 2.2%. People from the other minority ethnic groups are 4.3% of the study population.

It was decided that since all undergraduates must be in possession of the Secondary School Certificate Examination (SSCE) O' level before enrollment, Question 5 (highest educational qualification) would not be considered as a factor for this study. By Nigerian standard, the linguistic habits of undergraduates reflect those of literate Nigerians. Similarly, Question 6 (name of institution of higher learning) is not considered for the analysis.

<b>Literacy in Nigerian Languages</b>		
	Frequency	%
Hausa	64	5.5
Igbo	245	21.2
Yoruba	866	75
Nigerian Pidgin	809	70
Others	202	17.5

Question 7 requires that respondents specify the Nigerian languages they are literate in and literacy here refers to the ability to both read and write. Responses to Question 7 indicate that only 64 people (i.e. 5.5%) describe themselves as being both able to read and write the Hausa language; 245 participants (21.2%) are literate in Igbo; 866 respondents (75%) can read and write Yoruba, while 809 (i.e. 70.1%) report that they are literate in Nigerian Pidgin. Some 202 respondents (17.5%) indicate that they are literate mostly in French, Arabic and a few minority languages. French is Nigeria's second official language and literacy in Arabic is due to the Islamic religious education.

<b>Q8 Internet Access</b>	
At Cybercafé	68.9%
At Home	24.4%
At Work	4.1%
On Wireless / Mobile Devices	44.7%

The responses to Question 8 and Question 9 show that 44.7% of participants gain access to the Internet on wireless or mobile devices while 39.9% of respondents use the mobile phone and related devices for web browsing.

<b>Q9 Means of Web Browsing</b>	
Desktop	53.3%
Mobile Phone / Devices	39.3%
Personal laptop	28.7%
Rented / Borrowed Devices	10.3%

This is why any study on Internet usage in Nigeria have to be supplemented with mobile telephony practices.

**Daily SMS Texts**

	Frequency	%
0	104	9.0
1	176	15.3
2	238	20.6
3	234	20.3
4	100	8.7
5	116	10.1
6-10	126	10.9
>10	60	5.2
Total	1154	100.0

Respondents send a mean of 4.3 texts daily but by grouping the results we see that 9% of respondents do not send texts daily; 74.9% send 1-5 texts daily; 10.9% send 6-10 texts daily and only 5.2% send more than 10 SMS daily.

**Q11 Languages for SMS Texts**

	Frequency	%
English Only	530	45.9
English+Yoruba	224	19.4
English+Pidgin	342	29.6
English+Igbo	22	1.9
English+Hausa	14	1.2
Pidgin Only	5	.4
Other	17	1.5
Total	1154	100.0

The responses to Question 11 are particularly interesting because they correspond

to our initial ranking of English and indigenous languages in Nigerian textual CMC. In electronic discourse, English (with 45.9% usage) is the default choice for literate Nigerians. Moreover, participants report that in digital English code switching, they use more of Nigerian Pidgin (29.6%) and Yoruba (19.4%) than the other languages. Just a few respondents state that they could use English with Nigerian Pidgin and Yoruba, or English with Nigerian Pidgin and French / Igbo. Hausa has the least combination of such multilingual discourse as reported by subjects.

### 7.1.2 USE OF THE NEW AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Questions 12-20 survey respondents' use of the Internet and Web 2.0 platforms. Email (Q12) and Facebook (Q13) are the most employed Internet and Web 2.0 services for interactive text-based communication: 94.5% and 84.8% respectively. In Sesan's (2010) report, his findings are similar to what we have here.

**Q12 Email Activities**

	Frequency	%
Read ONLY	179	15.5
Read and Write	756	65.5
Write ONLY	156	13.5
Not applicable	63	5.5
Total	1154	100.0

**Q13 Facebook Activities**

	Frequency	%
Read ONLY	84	7.3
Read and Write	723	62.7
Write ONLY	172	14.9
Not applicable	175	15.2
Total	1154	100.0

More than half of the respondents (i.e. 64.7%) do not use Twitter or microblogging services (Q14) and similarly 63.5% of the population has not embraced blogging (Q15).

**Q14 Twitter & Related Activities**

	Frequency	%
Read ONLY	166	14.4
Read and Write	218	18.9
Write ONLY	23	2.0
Not applicable	747	64.7
Total	1154	100.0

Writing a regular blog takes some amount of time and it requires some measure of commitment. We are aware that in December 2010, Microsoft Anglophone West Africa hosted its first “Bloggers' Brunch” in Lagos because according to the PR officer of Microsoft Nigeria, Ms Ngozi Ife Anene, “Microsoft recognizes blogging as [a] major medium for web-based communications” and therefore organized the event for Nigerian bloggers to share concepts, tools and experiences<sup>68</sup>.

**Q15 Blogging Activities**

	Frequency	%
Read ONLY	217	18.8
Read and Write	132	11.4
Write ONLY	72	6.2
Not applicable	733	63.5
Total	1154	100.0

More people (58.3%) read online newspapers (Q16) without adding comments to

<sup>68</sup> Reported in the Nigerian *Vanguard* newspaper on January 11, 2011  
<http://www.vanguardngr.com/2011/01/microsoft-hosts-forum-for-bloggers>

the readers' response section. Usually, when people read newspapers, they want to read about current developments in the world.

**Q16 Nigerian Online Newspapers**

	Frequency	%
Read ONLY	673	58.3
Read and Write	100	8.7
Write ONLY	18	1.6
Not applicable	363	31.5
Total	1154	100.0

Compared to electronic newspapers, more interactive exchanges (28%) take place on Internet discussion forums (Q17).

**Q17 Online Discussion Forums**

	Frequency	%
Read only	255	22.1
Read and Write	323	28.0
Write only	105	9.1
Not applicable	471	40.8
Total	1154	100.0

Instant messaging (Q18) is used in varying degrees by respondents and in total 76.4% use it.

**Q18 Instant Messaging / Web Chat**

	Frequency	%
Very often	197	17.1
Not often	404	35.0
Often	281	24.4
Not at all	272	23.6
Total	1154	100.0

The phenomenon is very common among undergraduates. As for the general uses

of the Internet by students (Q19), 92.5% state that they use social media for academics and professionally-related purposes. This is to be expected in a students' community.

**Q19 Academic Information Sourcing on Internet**

	Frequency	%
very often	356	30.8
not often	297	25.7
often	414	35.9
not at all	57	4.9
no opinion	30	2.6
Total	1154	100.0

In a related manner, 71.8% of the study population report that Internet usage (Q20) has had either positive or very positive impacts on their studies and career.

**Q20 Effect of Online Time on Studies**

	Frequency	%
very positively	314	27.2
very negatively	104	9.0
positively	515	44.6
negatively	46	4.0
i don't know	158	13.7
no opinion	17	1.5
Total	1154	100.0

**7.1.3 TYPOGRAPHIC CHOICES AND SHORTENINGS**

Questions 21-23 provide us with the opportunity to revisit the issue of typographic choices we raised in Chapter 2. Interestingly, and as we expected, 62.1% of respondents prefers the non-standard spelling variants / typographic representations of NIGERIA (Q21) but mostly as follows: '9ja' (31.6%) and 'Naija' (24.4%). In the blank space provided for other comments, a few



participants noted that an option 'Nig' should have been included in our list from which they could choose.

**Q21 Spelling Nigeria in SMS and Online**

	Frequency	%
9ja	365	31.6
9geria	52	4.5
Naija	281	24.4
Nija	18	1.6
Nigeria	403	34.9
no opinion	35	3.0
Total	1154	100.0

However, when asked to give reason(s) for the spelling choices above, the most plausible factor from all the ones provided is space-delimited constraint (38%) for Question 22 and similarly 65.4% of this same factor for the use of shortenings in Question 23.

**7.1.4 ASSESSMENTS OF PHONOLOGICAL VARIATIONS**

Questions 24-30 which constitute Section C of the survey evaluate respondents' assessments of phonological variations in Nigerian English Accent(s).

**Q24**

	Frequency	%
Edo	81	7.0
Efik	89	7.7
Hausa	195	16.9
Igbo	228	19.8
Yoruba	459	39.8
no opinion	102	8.8
Total	1154	100.0

Respondents (39.8%) opine that people of Yoruba origin are the most likely to

pronounce 'interest' as *H-interest* (Q24) indicating the ethno-linguistic influence of Yoruba. This is what is called the 'h' factor. The sound segment is not in the inventory of Yoruba phonology.

The assessment of the variable in Q25 also shows that 63.9% of the respondents is of the opinion that Yoruba-speaking interactants are the most likely to pronounce 'picture' as picSHur realizing the affricate /tʃ/ as a fricative /ʃ/. This regional peculiarity by Yoruba speakers of English is as a result of mother tongue influence since Yoruba phonology does not have /tʃ/ as a sound segment.

**Q25**

	Frequency	%
Edo	99	8.6
Efik	70	6.1
Hausa	91	7.9
Igbo	80	6.9
Yoruba	737	63.9
no opinion	77	6.7
Total	1154	100.0

66.6% of the respondents believes that Igbo speakers of English are the mostly likely to produce the variable in Q26 *oyel* for 'oil' revealing the monophthongizations of the diphthong /ɔɪ/. Igbo phonology lacks diphthongs in its inventory.

**Q26**

	Frequency	%
Edo	149	12.9
Efik	52	4.5
Hausa	34	2.9
Igbo	768	66.6
Yoruba	80	6.9
no opinion	71	6.2
Total	1154	100.0

For Q27 28.1% of the participants states that an individual of Igbo ethnicity is more likely to alternate /r/ for /l/ while 38.1% think that the individual is of Efik ethnicity. Nigerian linguists (e.g. Awonusi, 2004; Igboanusi, 2006) have established that Igbo speakers of English (particularly those from Anambra and Enugu States) are the more likely to pronounce 'Lawrence' as *Rawlence*; 'London' as *Rondon*; and 'Law' as *Raw*.

**Q27**

	Frequency	%
Edo	103	8.9
Efik	440	38.1
Hausa	139	12.0
Igbo	324	28.1
Yoruba	42	3.6
no opinion	106	9.2
Total	1154	100.0

There is an overwhelming agreement by respondents (81.3%) that Hausa speakers of English are the most likely to realize /p/ as /f/ in Question 28.

**Q28**

	Frequency	%
Edo	21	1.8
Efik	44	3.8
Hausa	938	81.3
Igbo	25	2.2
Yoruba	77	6.7
no opinion	49	4.2
Total	1154	100.0

Similarly, 81.2% of respondents reports that people of Hausa ethnicity are the most likely to produce the variable in Question 29. Jibril's (1982:227) analysis of

these (i.e. Q28 & Q29) support respondents' observations when he opines that the two labio-dental fricatives /f/ and /v/ are reliable markers of Hausa ethnicity. He further explains that “Hausa has only /p/ which may vary between [p], [Φ] and – among sophisticated bilinguals – [f], but the phoneme is certainly not /f/ even though the orthography represents it as f” (p. 227) which corroborates Dunstan's (1969:75) assertion that some speakers use [p] in word-initial position for [f].

**Q 29**

	Frequency	%
Edo	30	2.6
Efik	59	5.1
Hausa	937	81.2
Igbo	27	2.3
Yoruba	44	3.8
no opinion	57	4.9
Total	1154	100.0

In Q30, 46.4% of the study population believes that a person of Efik ethnicity is more likely to alternate /k/ for /g/ in 'ògá', a Yoruba loan into Nigerian English whereas 18.4% of respondents thinks that it is a Hausa speaker of English who is likely to do so.

**Q 30**

	Frequency	%
Edo	115	10.0
Efik	536	46.4
Hausa	212	18.4
Igbo	144	12.5
Yoruba	50	4.3
no opinion	97	8.4
Total	1154	100.0

It has, however, been reported in the literature (e.g. Adetugbo, 1977; Awonusi, 2004; Igboanusi, 2006) that this is a feature of Efikness because according to

Dunstan (1969:38), in Efik phonology [g] is an allophone of /k/ in non-initial positions.

## 7.2 DISCUSSIONS

It has been stressed that all the graphemic representations of phonological crossing tested in the survey are not artificially constructed but are indeed instances of language use culled from informal Nigerian electronic discourse. As we also stated in Chapter 6, the playful nature of informal electronic discourse permits netizens to graphemically index the Hausaness, Igboness, Yorubanness, and Efikness of Nigerians. Elsewhere, Rajadurai (2007:296) has observed that “instances of crossing seem to cluster around episodes of humour and light-hearted banter”.

A chi-square test is used to show the statistical relationships between variables.

*The relationship between gender and the number of text messages sent (i.e. Qs 1 vs. Qs 10).*

The chi-square test shows that there is no significant relationship between gender and the number of daily text messages sent ( $X^2 = 8.130$ ,  $df = 7$ ,  $p < 0.321$ ).

.

*Gender and the typographical representation of NIGERIA (i.e. Qs 1 vs. Qs 21)*

There is a significant relationship between gender and the writing of NIGERIA differently from the standard typography because the p-value is less than 0.05 ( $X^2 = 14.319$ ,  $df = 4$ ,

$p < 0.006$ ). Females are more likely to write Nigeria as '9ja', males are more likely to write Nigeria as '9geria', males are more likely to write Nigeria as 'Naija'

as well as males being more likely to write Nigeria as 'Nigeria'.

**Gender vs Spelling Nigeria in SMS and Online**

			Spelling Nigeria in SMS and Online					Total
			9ja	9geria	Naija	Nija	Nigeria	
Gender	Male	Count	214	18	142	9	198	581
		% within Gender	36.8%	3.1%	24.4%	1.5%	34.1%	100.0%
	Female	Count	151	34	139	9	205	538
		% within Gender	28.1%	6.3%	25.8%	1.7%	38.1%	100.0%
Total		Count	365	52	281	18	403	1119
		% within Gender	32.6%	4.6%	25.1%	1.6%	36.0%	100.0%

*The most significant reason for (2) above (i.e. Qs 1 vs. Qs 22)*

Of all the reasons provided from which respondents could select, *writing space constraint* tops the motivation for the spelling choices. However, there is no significant relationship between gender and every other option in Question 22 because the p-value is greater than 0.05 except the option of appropriateness or correctness and others. We can conclude that the reason for writing Nigeria the way they do is because they feel it is appropriate or correct and also for some other reasons not listed in the categories.

*4. The age groups that are more likely to write NIGERIA differently from the standard typography (i.e. Qs 2 vs. Qs 21).*

The chi-square test indicates no statistically significant relationship between age group and the tendency to spell Nigeria using the non-standard orthography ( $X^2 = 16.599$ ,  $df = 20$ ,  $p < 0.681$ ). Nonetheless, what the statistics shows is that the older one becomes the lesser the tendency to embrace non-standard spellings. So, Abati (2009) may be right after all that younger people are the ones who are prone to 'resent' or 'tarnish' the image of the country. Well, younger people have

been known to use shortenings and short cuts in text-based CMC.

5. *The relationship between the number of SMS texts sent and the tendency to use more languages (i.e. Qs 10 vs. Qs 11).*

While there is no clear cut correlation between the number of SMS sent and the tendency to mix languages, respondents tend to be more comfortable to switch codes when the daily SMS sent is 3 on the average. It is also interesting that Nigerian Pidgin mixture competes with English ONLY when people send 6-10 SMS per day; and Nigerian Pidgin mixture is also the preferred choice when people send 3 SMS per day and wish to switch codes. This outcome is what we anticipated.

**Daily SMS Texts vs Languages for SMS Texts Crosstabulation**

			Languages for SMS Texts						Total	
			English Only	English+ Yoruba	English+ Pidgin	English+ Igbo	English+ Hausa	Pidgin Only		Other
Daily SMS Texts	1	Count	92	39	40	2	1		2	176
		% within Daily SMS Texts	52.3%	22.2%	22.7%	1.1%	.6%		1.1%	100.0%
	2	Count	111	39	79	6	2		1	238
		% within Daily SMS Texts	46.6%	16.4%	33.2%	2.5%	.8%		.4%	100.0%
	3	Count	106	44	74	5	3	1	1	234
		% within Daily SMS Texts	45.3%	18.8%	31.6%	2.1%	1.3%	.4%	.4%	100.0%
	4	Count	47	25	23	2	1	2		100
		% within Daily SMS Texts	47.0%	25.0%	23.0%	2.0%	1.0%	2.0%		100.0%
	5	Count	54	21	36	3	1		1	116
		% within Daily SMS Texts	46.6%	18.1%	31.0%	2.6%	.9%		.9%	100.0%
	6-10	Count	47	19	51	2	4	1	2	126
		% within Daily SMS Texts	37.3%	15.1%	40.5%	1.6%	3.2%	.8%	1.6%	100.0%
	>10	Count	17	16	24	1	1	1		60
		% within Daily SMS Texts	28.3%	26.7%	40.0%	1.7%	1.7%	1.7%		100.0%
Total	Count	474	203	327	21	13	5	7	1050	
	% within Daily SMS Texts	45.1%	19.3%	31.1%	2.0%	1.2%	.5%	.7%	100.0%	

In connection with the main research questions of the present study stated in the introductory chapter, the questionnaire survey addresses the issue of spelling variations and why typography has becoming a matter of national identity discourse in Nigeria. First, we notice that 62.1% of respondents prefers the non-standard spelling variants of NIGERIA but the main reason given for this is the

medium peculiarity of spacing (for textual exchanges through mobile phone and wireless devices). We expected more people to write 'Naija' as discussed in Chapter 1 but interestingly *9ja* (31.6%) tops the list of non-standard typography employed by the surveyed participants. Comments from questionnaire respondents indicate that some of them would have loved to see 'Nig' as a spelling variant in the list we provided. The computational effort of typing three graphemes (e.g. *9ja* or *Nig*) is lesser than that of writing 'Naija' or even NIGERIA. We had hypothesized that one of the reasons for spelling variation in textual CMC is creativity induced by medium constraints of the new media and mobile technologies.

Second, the survey confirms popular opinion about younger people being the vanguard of shortenings and, as Abati (2009) would be comfortable to assert, they are also the ones who 'tarnish' the image of NIGERIA through their unsanctioned creativity. The data analysis shows that the older one becomes the lesser the tendency to embrace non-standard spellings.

Third, people of ages 20-29 are the more likely to send SMS texts daily. This outcome is consistent with what has been reported in the literature on the volume of SMS texts sent by people in this category (e.g Awonusi, 2004, 2010; Chilwa, 2008; Dürscheid & Stark, 2011/in press; Ling, 2005; Ofulue, 2008; Taiwo, 2008; Thurlow & Poff, 2011).

Furthermore, the findings of the survey are revealing about code switching practices as reported by respondents. Participants tend to be more comfortable to switch codes when the daily SMS sent is 3 on the average. It is also interesting that Nigerian Pidgin mixture competes with English ONLY when people send 6-10 SMS per day; and Nigerian Pidgin mixture is also the preferred choice when people send 3 SMS per day and wish to switch codes. This outcome is what we hypothesized in Chapter 1 in our ranking of language use by multilingual



Nigerian netizens in the following order: English > Nigerian Pidgin > Yoruba > Igbo > Hausa > Others. The analysis has shown that, in electronic discourse, English is the default choice for literate Nigerians. Moreover, participants report that in digital English code switching, they use more of Nigerian Pidgin and Yoruba than the other languages. And as for phonological variation and its simulation via crossing in CMC, the general intuitions of respondents are in harmony with what Nigerian linguists have observed.

## CHAPTER 8

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

For both researchers and participants, a central aspect of understanding the dynamics of mediation is to 'disaggregate' the Internet: not to look at a monolithic medium called 'the Internet', but rather at a range of practices, software and hardware technologies, modes of representation and interaction ... What we were observing was not so much people's use of 'the Internet', but rather how they assembled various technical possibilities which added up to *their* Internet.

Miller & Slater (2000:14)

#### 8.1 CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

The present study reflects the fact that by the end of 2010 we are living in technologically-interesting times, and there is nothing that demonstrates this more than the ubiquity and availability of electronic data for linguists and social media scholars. Various research paradigms are undergoing modifications in order to cope with newly emerging textual data via the Internet and mobile / wireless devices because, usually, new linguistic data with medium-specific features may pose analytical challenges to an existing theory of language use, and in some cases a refinement or re-application of theories may be necessary (Androutsopoulos, 2008, 2010; Androutsopoulos & Beißwenger, 2008; Hinrichs, 2006). Although Internet activities by Nigerians have been going on for the past two decades, scholarship in Nigerian CMC is still in its infancy in comparison to the statistics of Internet users/mobile phone subscribers in Nigeria, and the electronic data being produced by Nigerians.

This project has been preoccupied with three main research questions. For the first set of questions (the 'how' and 'why' of spelling variations), it has been argued that writing practices in CMC make typography a national identity matter in Nigeria. SMS and social media have become avenues of identity work by younger Nigerians and we contend that the generational embrace of 'new'

typology and writing technique is driven by two main factors: ideology and technology. We give five reasons to support this argument.

1. *The domestication / appropriation of globalised graphemic innovations / writing practices by Nigerian netizens and textizens especially the youth.*

Discursive evidence from the written explanations /responses given by Nigerian youth indicates that non-official typography has been adopted as a more indigenous and appropriate concept for defining their Nigerianness. Then the use of technology represents the domestication of globalised graphemic conventions / innovations for symbolic local creativity.

2. *Creativity induced by medium constraints of new media and mobile technologies.*

Following Herring (1998), the spelling peculiarities of CMC are less of errors caused by inattention or lack of the knowledge of standard forms. Rather, these are intentional and are mostly “deliberate choices made by users to economize on typing effort, mimic spoken language features, or express themselves creatively” (Herring, 2001). The ease with which creativity is enhanced in electronic discourse and the innovative dispositions of youths make online platforms appealing to the youths because these afford them “a place to have a voice, to engage in important identity work, and to create texts around local, national and global issues that are important to them” (McGinnis, Goodstein-Stolzenberga and Saliania, 2007).

3. *Ideological struggle and resistance to officialdom.*

Typographic choice is not only generational but also a means for ideological struggle, resistance to officialdom, and even 'spelling rebellion' as Sebba (2003) puts it. Blog posts and responses from Nigerian youth confirm this.

4. *Zipf's principle of least effort or linguistic economy.*

This is a plausible explanation for the colloquial contraction of *Naija* for identity work and the general tendencies for shortenings and shortcuts in Nigerian Internet and CMC discourse.

5. *Ethnolinguistic nationalism.*

In expressing their identity, Nigerians like “speakers for whom national identity is fluid ... exploit whichever identity they want for social gain, often through linguistic behaviour” (Llamas 2010:236). However, the discursive affordances of electronic communication and the plethora of digital texts introduce a new dimension to the traditional national identity question. Following Wodak et. al. (1999 , 2009), we argue that a national collectivity can be established through social practices such as spelling and typography, which lead to the graphemic representation and negotiation of *homo Nigerianus*.

Additionally, the questionnaire survey also addresses the issue of spelling variations and why typography has become a matter of national identity discourse in Nigeria. We notice that 62.1% of respondents prefers the non-standard spelling variants of NIGERIA but the main reason given for this is the medium peculiarity of spacing (for textual exchanges through mobile phone and wireless devices). We expected more people to write 'Naija' as discussed in Chapter 1 but interestingly *9ja* (31.6%) tops the list of non-standard typography employed by the surveyed participants. Comments from questionnaire respondents indicate that some of them would have loved to see 'Nig' as a spelling variant in the list we provided. The computational effort of typing three graphemes (e.g. *9ja* or *Nig*) is lesser than that of writing 'Naija' or even NIGERIA. Second, the survey confirms popular opinion about younger people being the vanguard of shortenings and, as Abati (2009) would be comfortable to assert, they are also the ones who 'tarnish' the image of NIGERIA through their unsanctioned creativity. The data analysis shows that the older one becomes the

lesser the tendency to embrace non-standard spellings.

To conclude this part of the discussion, Abati (2009) and Akunyili's (2010) stance versus that of the youth is a reinvention of two conflicting tendencies in linguistic systems observed by Leopold (1930:102) when he asserts that “Linguistic development follows not one tendency, but two opposing ones: towards distinctness and towards economy. Either of these poles prevails, but both are present and alternately preponderant”. The institutional emphasis on using the official typography for the country is on the distinctness pole whereas the alternatives being used by Nigerian youth tilt towards economy. Similarly, Tauli (1958:50) would later propose that innovations in language use is driven by five forces: “(1) tendency towards clarity, (2) tendency towards ease or economy of effort, (3) emotional impulses, (4) aesthetic tendencies, (5) social impulses”. All these factors come into play in the Nigerian typographic identity work. Indeed, typographic choices have social meanings because they can be used to communicate sociocultural affiliation and identity (Androutsopoulos, 2004) as well as to project ideological dispositions.

The second research question is on how the socio-pragmatics of language choice and contact phenomena in informal electronic discourse can be theoretically accounted for. We hypothesized that intertextuality, and by extension interdiscursivity, is an explanatory technique for modelling the pragmatics of linguistic heterogeneity in electronic discourse. Integrating Bourdieu's (1977) economics of linguistic exchanges into the Faircloughian (1992) application of intertextuality, we introduced a concept we call 'interdiscursive language switching', to account for top-down intertextual language mixture in digital discourse. Moreover, by linguistic marketing is meant discourse as a vehicle for 'promotional acts' and for 'selling' particular cultures and ideologies to multicultural and multilingual readers/audiences. For instance, the use of Nigerian languages with Nigerian Pidgin online is promotional and for

*existential* negotiation. This results in language mixture which is an instantiation of freedom of speech, freedom of switch and freedom to switch. The underlying pragmatic motivation for top-down language mixture and alternation in Nigerian virtual discourse is attention-getting with the aim of inducing an interdiscursive writer-reader cognitive as well as communicative interactions. Other pragmatic functions of code switching discussed in the study include allusive textuality, amusing phaticity, anticipated interactivity, affective expressivity, and audience affiliation or alienation. Thus, intertextuality is an explanatory technique for investigating previously unexplored phenomena in digital code switching.

In chapter 4, it is argued that the graphemic representations of shibboleths in Nigerian CMC is an act of language crossing, which enunciates the phonological patterns of regional accents of Nigerian English. Rampton's (1995) theoretic notion of crossing is employed. Then the questionnaire survey justifies our adoption of crossing for the stylization of regional Nigerian English accents. As for phonological variation and its simulation by crossing in CMC, the general intuitions of respondents are in harmony with what linguists (e.g. Adetugbo, 1977; Awonusi, 1986, 2004; Bamgbose, 1971; Igboanusi, 2006; Jibril, 1982; Simo Bobda, 2007) have observed.

Taking up the third research question of this study, language use in the new media for either electioneering, politicking or the enhancement of good governance ethics reflects a dialectical interplay of language, politics and technology. Klein (1998) argues that the “linguistic study of political communication” constitutes a sub-discipline of linguistics while Burkhardt (1996) opines that “all types of public, institutional and private talks on politics as well as the use of lexical and stylistic linguistic instruments characterising talks about political contexts” are regarded as being within the domain of political discourse. Therefore, in the context of the Nigerian 2007-2010 electoral/democratic process, it has been highlighted how Nigerian bloggers used

the weblog for mobilization. Apart from using the weblog and Twitter for mobilization, there is evidence of the social media being used as well for participatory politics. This has been textually illustrated through the choice of words and sentiments expressed in blog posts and tweets. It was stated that certain verbal elements such as “to elect”, “to vote”, “voted” and “cast vote” specify both the act and goal of going to the polls. These words are reflective of the electorates’ sentiments of what the purpose of elections should be: to elect politicians by casting of votes. This is where a distinction is usually drawn between an electoral process and a selection charade when people’s votes do not seem to matter. In elections, the will of the majority of the masses is effected but in selections candidates are forced on the populace often by orchestrated electoral irregularities. The sentiment expressed by a majority of the online interactants whose blogs and tweets are surveyed for this study is that of viewing the 2007 political process as ‘selection’. The choice of words and the tone of the messages contained in the blogs and tweets examined, support the perception of the process as largely antithetical to genuine democracy. Hence, aspirations of change via social media require more offline activities.

Nonetheless, for the sake of explanatory exigency, relevant aspects of speech acts theory (SAT) (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969) are fused with critical discourse analysis (CDA) for the construction of our data-derived, election-oriented, politico-pragmatic tweet acts, in terms of what we call Good Governance Maxims (GGM). It has been discursively explicated that tweets are a product of discourse, socio-political and cultural practices. They are produced, disseminated and consumed (or read) by netizens who believe in the tenets of good governance. At least, the textual evidence in this study shows that it is the aspiration of the Nigerian electorates for democracy to be better practised as they yearn for responsible and effective governance in Nigeria. As more Nigerians make use of the technological affordances of online public sphere (Castells,

2008), democratization in Nigeria will be solidified through electronically-enhanced dialogue between public officials and the ordinary Nigerians.

The sampling of 1,154 Nigerian undergraduates offline illustrates how CMC can be supplemented by a sociolinguistic survey in what Androutsopoulos (2006:424) calls “the observation of Internet use in offline social spaces” through a blend of on- and offline ethnography. The offline survey shows that people of ages 20-29 are the more likely to send SMS texts daily.

Furthermore, the findings of the survey are revealing about code switching practices as reported by respondents. Participants tend to be more comfortable to switch codes when the daily SMS sent is 3 on the average. It is also interesting that Nigerian Pidgin mixture competes with English ONLY when people send 6-10 SMS per day; and Nigerian Pidgin mixture is also the preferred choice when people send 3 SMS per day and wish to switch codes. This outcome is what we hypothesized in Chapter 1 in our ranking of language use by multilingual Nigerian netizens in the following order: English > Nigerian Pidgin > Yoruba > Igbo > Hausa > Others. The analysis has shown that, in electronic discourse, English is the default choice for literate Nigerians. Moreover, participants report that in digital English code switching, they use more of Nigerian Pidgin and Yoruba than the other languages.

The language choice of Nigerians in SMS texts above tallies with the findings in our Internet data. Using the heterogeneity of headlines as barometer for instance, Nigerian Pidgin contributes 29 % of the lexical items, Yoruba and colloquial Nigerianisms equally constitute 26% each of the wordings, Igbo is 8 %, French is 5 % and Hausa is 2 %. This not only strengthens our position on the matter, it is reflective of what holds in offline conversation among literate bi/multilingual Nigerians.



## **8.2 SOME LIMITATIONS**

We are grateful to the Nigerian Professors and lecturers who generously and sacrificially assisted with the questionnaire survey. However, the receipt and collation of the completed copies would have been more efficient were this researcher physically present in Nigeria and the responses would have come in early enough for analysis. The last set of copies reached this researcher in December 2010.

With the prominence of Facebook in current Nigerian governance, it would have been interesting to do a discourse analysis of President Goodluck Jonathan's online interactions with his 'friends'. Also, the massive data we collected on #Light up Nigeria (LUN) and #Enough is Enough (EiE) with our Internet chat sub-corpus would have been linguistically benefited by a conversational discourse-analytic study.

Notwithstanding these and related challenges, the 1,154 questionnaire responses analyzed suffice to complement the kind of work done in this study.

## **8.3 PROPOSALS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

Suggestions for future studies are stated below.

We wanted to examine the emergence of technolectal Nigerianisms / Nigerian English (TNE) but time factor has necessitated that this be considered in a future study which we plan to do. Similarly, it would be interesting to employ Koch & Oesterreicher's (1985, 1994, 2007) communicative model for the study of Nigerian CMC data especially Nigerian Internet chats.

We would like to see publicly available annotated corpora of informal Nigerian

social media discourse (e.g. annotation of GEJ's Facebook posts with comments from his online interactants).

The special case of the Nigerian civil servant who could not find any trace of code switching or language mixture in about 400 SMS texts he received is puzzling and such cases require one-to-one face-to-face examination of the data by linguists.

Supplementing qualitative analysis with quantitative interpretation is more beneficial for policy formulations in research, education and governance.

#### **8.4 FINAL COMMENTS**

The findings of the present study about the 'emotional and social impulses' (Tauli, 1958) of identity work through linguistic creativity in Nigerian CMC are in line with Spilioti's (2009) study on Greek SMS in that “graphemic choices are employed as a means of indexing the participants’ affiliation with global popular cultures and enhancing expressivity in a medium of reduced paralinguistic cues” (2009:394).

## References

- Abati, Reuben. 2009, June 21 & July 5. A Nation's Identity Crisis. *The Guardian* Newspaper, Nigeria.
- Achumba, A. 2007, April 21. Nigeria Votes 2007 Part II: The Presidential Election [Web log message]  
<http://according2adaure.blogspot.com/2007/04/nigeria-votes-2007-part-ii-presidential.html>
- Adamic, Lada and Natalie Glance. 2005. The Political Blogosphere and the 2004 U.S. Election: Divided They Blog. 2nd Annual Weblogging Workshop, WWW 2005, May 10, Chiba, Japan.
- Agger, Gunhild. 1999. Intertextuality Revisited: Dialogues and Negotiations in Media Studies. *Canadian Journal of Aesthetics*.  
[http://www.uqtr.ca/AE/vol\\_4/gunhild\(frame\).htm](http://www.uqtr.ca/AE/vol_4/gunhild(frame).htm)
- Ajao, David. 2007, April 18. Nigeria: Blogging the Historic Election (Part 1) [Web log message]  
<http://www.globalvoicesonline.org/2007/04/18/nigeria-blogging-the-historic-election-part-1/>
- Ajao, David. 2007, May 4. Nigeria: Blogging the Historic Election (Part 2) [Web log message]  
<http://www.davidajao.com/blog/2007/05/04/nigeria-blogging-the-historic-election-part-2/>
- Akinsanmi, T. 2006, June 9. Here They Come Again: Deciding our Future through the 2007 Elections [Web log message]  
<http://pourjamais.blogspot.com/2006/06/here-they-come-again-deciding-our.html>
- Andersen, Jack. 2008. The Concept of Genre in Information Studies. *Annual Review of Information Science and Technology*, 339-367.
- Androutsopoulos, Jannis. 2004. Typography as a Resource of Media Style: Cases from Music Youth Culture. In: Mastoridis, Klimis (ed.) *Proceedings of the 1st International Conference on Typography and Visual Communication*, 381-392. Thessaloniki: University of Macedonia Press.
- Androutsopoulos, Jannis. 2006. Introduction: Sociolinguistics and Computer-Mediated Communication. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 10(4): 419-438.
- Androutsopoulos, Jannis. 2007. Language Choice and Code Switching in German-Based Diasporic Web Forums. In B. Danet and S. Herring (Eds.), *The Multilingual Internet: Language, Culture, and Communication Online*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 340-361.
- Androutsopoulos, Jannis. 2008. Potentials and Limitations of Discourse-Centred Online Ethnography. *Language@Internet* 5, article 8.

[http://www.languageatinternet.de/articles/2008/1610/index\\_html](http://www.languageatinternet.de/articles/2008/1610/index_html)

Androutsopoulos, Jannis. 2010. Localizing the Global on the Participatory Web. In: N. Coupland (Ed.) *The Handbook of Language and Globalisation*, 203 – 231 [Pre-print]

Androutsopoulos, Jannis (forthcoming / 2011) Code-switching in computer-mediated communication. In: S. C. Herring, D. Stein & T. Virtanen (eds), *Handbook of the Pragmatics of CMC*. (Mouton de Gruyter). Second draft, 4 October 2010.

Androutsopoulos, Jannis and Volker Hinnenkamp. 2001. Code-Switching in der bilingualen Chat-Kommunikation: ein explorativer Blick auf #hellas und #turks. In: Beißwenger, Michael (Hg.) *Chat-Kommunikation*, 367-401. Stuttgart: Ibidem.

Androutsopoulos, Jannis and Arno Scholz. 2002. On the Recontextualization of Hip-hop in European Speech Communities. *PhiN –Philologie im Netz* 19, 1-42. [<http://www.fu-berlin.de/phin/phin19/p19t1.htm>]

Androutsopoulos, Jannis and Alexandra Georgakopoulou (Eds.). 2003. *Discourse Constructions of Youth Identities*. Amsterdam / Philadelphia: Benjamins.

Androutsopoulos, Jannis and Evelyn Ziegler. 2004. Exploring Language Variation on the Internet: Regional Speech in a Chat Community. In: Gunnarsson, Britt-Louise et al. (Eds.) *Language Variation in Europe. Papers from ICLaVE 2*, 99-111. Uppsala: Uppsala University Press.

Androutsopoulos, Jannis and Michael Beißwenger. 2008. Introduction: Data and Methods in Computer-Mediated Discourse Analysis. *Language@Internet* 5, article 2. [http://www.languageatinternet.de/articles/2008/1609/index\\_html](http://www.languageatinternet.de/articles/2008/1609/index_html)

Argenter, Joan. 2001. Code-switching and Dialogism: Verbal Practices among Catalan Jews in the Middle Ages. *Language in Society* 30(3): 377- 402.

Auer, Peter. 1984. *Bilingual Conversation*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Auer, Peter. (Ed.). 1998. *Code-switching in Conversation: Language, Interaction, and Identity*. London: Routledge.

Austin, John. 1962. *How to do Things with Words*. Oxford: Clarendon.

Awonusi, Victor. 2004. “Little” Englishes and the Law of Energetics: A Sociolinguistic Study of SMS Text Messages as Register and Discourse in Nigerian English. In V. Awonusi and E. Babalola (eds.), *Domestication of English in Nigeria: A Festschrift in Honour of Abiodun Adetugbo*. University of Lagos Press, pp 45 – 62.

- Awonusi, Victor. 2010. Beyond Energetics: A Sociolinguistic Study of SMS Text Messages as Register and Discourse in Nigerian English. *Online Journal of Humanities* 1: 1-16.
- Ayantayo, Jacob. 2009. Religious Factors in the Nigerian Public Sphere: Burdens and Prospects. *African Development*, 34(3/4):93-109.
- Baker, Colin. 2001. *Foundations of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters Ltd.
- Bakhtin, Mikhail. 1981. *The Dialogic Imagination. Four Essays* (translated by Michael Holquist). Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Bamiro, Edmund. 2006. Nativization Strategies: Nigerianisms at the Intersection of Ideology and Gender in Achebe's Fiction. *World Englishes* 25(3/4): 315–328.
- Banks, Ken. 2007. And Then Came The Nigerian Elections: The Story of FrontlineSMS. *Stanford Journal of African Studies*, Spring/Fall, 2–4.
- Banky W. 2009, June 22. My response to the recent Guardian Newspaper Article by Mr Reuben Abati. *The Bank Statements*.  
<http://bankyw.blogspot.com/2009/06/my-response-to-recent-guardian.html>.
- Barack Obama. 2008, August 10. Announcing the VP candidate sometime between now & the Convention by txt msg & email [Twitter post]  
<http://twitter.com/BarackObama/status/883563719>
- Barker, George. 1947. Social Functions of Language in a Mexican-American Community. *Acta Americana* 5: 185-202.
- Baron, Naomi. 1998. Letters by Phone or Speech by Other Means: The Linguistics of Email. *Language and Communication* 18:133-170.
- Baron, Naomi. 2008. *Always On: Language in an Online and Mobile World*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Bastian, Misty. 1999. Nationalism in a Virtual Space: Immigrant Nigerians on the Internet. *West Africa Review*: 1, 1.  
 [iuiocode: <http://www.icaap.org/iuiocode?101.1.1.2>].
- Bauman, Richard. 2001. The Ethnography of Genre in a Mexican Market: Form, Function, Variation. In P. Eckert and J. Rickford (Eds.), *Style and Sociolinguistic Variation*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 57-77.
- Baym, Nancy. 1995. The Emergence of Community in Computer-Mediated Communication. In S. Jones (ed.) *CyberSociety: Computer-Mediated Communication and Community*. London/New Delhi: Sage Publications, pp.

138-163.

- Beißwenger, Michael. 2000. *Kommunikation in virtuellen Welten: Sprache, Text und Wirklichkeit. Eine Untersuchung zur Konzeptionalität von Kommunikationsvollzügen und zur textuellen Konstruktion von Welt in synchroner Internet-Kommunikation, exemplifiziert am Beispiel eines Webchats.* Stuttgart, Germany: Ibidem.
- Bell, Allan. 1991. *The Language of News Media.* Oxford: Blackwell.
- Benwell, Bethan and Elizabeth Stokoe. 2006. *Discourse and Identity.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Bergs, Alexander. 1999. Innovativer Sprachgebrauch bei computervermittelter Kommunikation,  
<http://www.linguistik.uni-bonn.de/downloads/ha01.html#5.%DFf>
- Bergs, Alexander. 2006. Analyzing Online Communication from a Social Network Point of View: Questions, Problems, Perspectives. *Language@Internet*, 3, article 3
- Bergs, Alexander. 2009. The Linguistics of Text Messaging. In: Charley Rowe & Eva L. Wyss (eds.) *New Media and Linguistic Change.* Creskill, NJ: Hampton Press.
- Bhatia, Tej. 1987. English in Advertising: Multiple Mixing and Media. *World Englishes*, 6(1): 33-48.
- Bhatt, Rakesh. 2008. In Other Words: Language Mixing, Identity Representations, and *third space.* *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 12(2):177-200.
- Blench, Roger. 2005. *An Atlas of Nigerian Languages.* Third Edition.  
<http://www.rogerblench.info/Language%20data/Africa/Nigeria/Atlas%20of%20Nigerian%20Languages-%20ed.%20III.pdf> Last assessed on 16 June 2008.
- Blom, Elma. 2003. *From Root Infinitive to Finite Sentence: The Acquisition of Verbal Inflections and Auxiliaries.* Doctoral Dissertation, Utrecht Institute of Linguistics LOT 70.
- Blom, Jan-Petter and John Gumperz. 1972. Social Meaning in Linguistic Structures: Code Switching in Northern Norway. In: J. Gumperz and D. Hymes (eds.), *Directions in Sociolinguistics: The Ethnography of Communication,* New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, pp. 407-434.
- Blommaert, Jan and Tope Omoniyi. 2006. Email Fraud: Language, Technology and the Indexicals of Globalisation. *Social Semiotics* (16)4: 573-605.
- Bolaji Aluko and Co. 2009, August. *Twittering Ekiti Electoral Developments.*  
<http://twitter.com/ekitirr>

- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1977. The Economics of Linguistic Exchanges. *Social Science Information* 16(6): 645-668.
- Boyd, D. M. & Ellison, N. B. 2007. Social Network Sites: Definition, History, and Scholarship. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 13(1), article 11. <http://jcmc.indiana.edu/vol13/issue1/boyd.ellison.html>
- Brown, Becky. 1993. The Social Consequences of Writing Louisiana Creole French. *Language in Society* 22:67-101.
- Brown, Roger and Arthur Gilman. 1960. The Pronouns of Power and Solidarity. In T.A. Sebeok (ed.), *Style in Language*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, pp. 253-276.
- Bucholtz, Mary. 1999. You da man: narrating the racial other in the production of white masculinity. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 3(4):443-460.
- Bucholtz, Mary and Kira Hall. 2005. Identity and Interaction: A Sociocultural Linguistic Approach. *Discourse Studies*, 7 (4-5): 585-614.
- Callahan, Laura. 2004. *Spanish/English Codeswitching in a Written Corpus*. Amsterdam /Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Canagarajah, A. Suresh. 2006. Negotiating the Local in English as a Lingua Franca. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 26: 197-218.
- Castells, Manuel. 1996 / 2000. *The Rise of the Network Society*. Oxford:Blackwell.
- Castells, Manuel. 2007. Communication, Power and Counter-power in the Network Society. *International Journal of Communication*, 1(1): 238-66.
- Castells, Manuel. 2008. The New Public Sphere: Global Civil Society, Communication Networks, and Global Governance. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 616-693.
- Chiluwa, Innocent. 2008 Assessing the Nigerianness of SMS Text Messages in English. *English Today* 24(1): 51-56.
- Chiluwa, Innocent. 2009. The Discourse of Digital Deceptions and '419' Emails. *Discourse Studies* 11: 635-660.
- Chiluwa, Innocent. 2010. Nigerian English in Informal Email Messages. *English World-Wide* 31(1): 40-61.
- Clyne, Michael. 1967. *Transference and Triggering*. The Hague: Nijhoff.
- Cross, R. 2005. Blogging for Votes: An Examination of the Interaction Between Weblogs and the Electoral Process. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Sociological Association, Marriott Hotel, Loews Philadelphia Hotel,

- Philadelphia, PA. [http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p34174\\_index.html](http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p34174_index.html)
- Crozier, David, and Roger Blench. 1992. *Index of Nigerian Languages*. Second Edition. Summer Institute of Linguistics, Dallas.
- Crowston, Kevin and Marie Williams. 2000. Reproduced and Emergent Genres of Communication on the World Wide Web. *The Information Society* 6: 201-215.
- Crystal, David. 2001. *Language and the Internet*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cutler, Cecilia A. 1999. Yorkville crossing: white teens, hip hop and African American English. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 3(3):428-442.
- Dahlgren, P. 2005. The Internet, Public Spheres, and Political Communication: Dispersion and Deliberation. *Political Communication*, 22(2): 147-62.
- Danet, Brenda. 2001. *Cyberpl@y: Communicating Online*. Oxford: Berg Publishers.
- Danet, Brenda and Susan Herring (Eds.). 2007. *The Multilingual Internet: Language, Culture, and Communication Online*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Davis, Boyd and Jeutonne Brewer. 1997. *Electronic Discourse: Linguistic Individuals in Virtual Space*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- De Fina, Anna, Deborah Schiffrin and Michael Bamberg. 2006. *Discourse and Identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- de Moor, A. & Efimova, L. 2004. An Argumentation Analysis of Weblog Conversations. Proc. of the 9th International Working Conference on the Language-Action Perspective on Communication Modelling (LAP 2004).
- de Zúñiga, H. G., Puig-I-Abril, E. & Rojas, H. 2009. Weblogs, Traditional Sources Online and Political Participation: An Assessment of how the Internet is Changing the Political Environment. *New Media and Society*, 11(4): 553-574.
- Deuber, Dagmar. 2005. *Nigerian Pidgin in Lagos: Language Contact, Variation and Change in an African Urban Setting*. London: Battlebridge.
- Deuber, Dagmar and Lars Hinrichs. 2007. Dynamics of Orthographic Standardization in Jamaican Creole and Nigerian Pidgin. *World Englishes* 26: 22-47.
- Dor, Daniel. 2003. On Newspaper Headlines as Relevance Optimizers. *Journal of Pragmatics* 35: 695-721.
- Döring, Nicola. 2003. *Sozialpsychologie des Internet*. Göttingen: Hogrefe.
- Drezner, D. & Farrell, H. 2004. The Power and Politics of Blogs. Paper Presented at the



American Political Science Association, July.  
www.utsc.utoronto.ca/~farrell/blogpaperfinal.pdf

- Duman, Steve and Miriam Locher. 2008. 'So let's talk. Let's chat. Let's start a dialog': An Analysis of the Conversation Metaphor Employed in Clinton's and Obama's YouTube Campaign Clips. *Multilingua* 27:193-230.
- Dürscheid, Christa. 1999. Zwischen Mündlichkeit und Schriftlichkeit: die Kommunikation im Internet. *Papiere zur Linguistik*, 60(1):17-30.
- Dürscheid, Christa. 2003. Medienkommunikation im Kontinuum von Mündlichkeit und Schriftlichkeit. Theoretische und empirische Probleme. *ZfAL*, 38:37-56.
- Edmondson, Willis. 1981. *Spoken Discourse: A Model for Analysis*. London & New York: Longman.
- Ekong, Uyinomen and Victor Ekong. 2010. M-Voting: A Panacea for Enhanced E-Participation. *Asian Journal of Information Technology* 9(2): 111-116.
- Elvis, Feuba. 2009. The Sociolinguistics of Mobile Phone SMS Usage in Cameroon and Nigeria. *The International Journal of Language Society and Culture* 28: 25-40.
- Fairclough, Norman. 1992a. Discourse and Text: Linguistic and Intertextual Analysis within Discourse Analysis. *Discourse and Society*, 3(2), 193-217.
- Fairclough, Norman. 1992b. Intertextuality in Critical Discourse Analysis. *Linguistics and Education* 4: 269-293.
- Fairclough, Norman. 1993. Critical Discourse Analysis and the Marketization of Public Discourse: The Universities. *Discourse and Society* 4: 133-168
- Fairclough, Norman. 1995a. *Critical Discourse Analysis*. Boston: Addison Wesley.
- Fairclough, Norman. 1995b. *Media Discourse*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Fairclough, Norman. 2003. *Analysing Discourse: Textual Analysis for Social Research*. London: Routledge.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria. 1981. National Policy on Education. Revised. NERDC Press, Lagos.
- Ferrara, Kathleen, Hans Brunner and Greg Whittemore. 1991. Interactive Written Discourse as an Emergent Register. *Written Communication* 8(1):8-34.
- Fishman, Joshua. 1965. Who speaks what Language to whom and when? *La Linguistique*, 2: 67-88.
- Franceschini, Rita. 1998. Code-switching and the Notion of Code in Linguistics. In P.

- Auer (ed.), *Code-switching in Conversation: Language, Interaction, and Identity*. London: Routledge, pp. 51-72.
- Grosjean, Francois. 1982. *Life with Two Languages: An Introduction to Bilingualism*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Gruber, Helmut. 2000. Theme and Intertextuality in Scholarly E-mail Messages. *Functions of Language* 7(1): 79-115.
- Gumperz, John. 1982. *Discourse Strategies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Habermas, Jürgen. 1964. The Public Sphere: An Encyclopedia Article. *New German Critique* 1 (3): 49-55. [The article originally appeared in: Fischer Lexikon. 1964. *Staat und Gesellschaft*, Frankfurt am Main, pp. 220-226.]
- Habermas, Jürgen. 1989 / [1962]. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*. Cambridge, UK: Polity.
- Habermas, Jürgen. 1992. Further Reflections on the Public Sphere. In C. Calhoun (ed.) *Habermas and the Public Sphere*. Cambridge: The MIT Press, pp. 421-461.
- Hård af Segerstad, Y. 2002. *Use and Adaptation of Written Language to the Conditions of Computer-Mediated Communication*. Doctoral Dissertation, Göteborg University, Sweden: [http://www.ling.gu.se/~ylvah/dokument/ylva\\_diss.pdf](http://www.ling.gu.se/~ylvah/dokument/ylva_diss.pdf)
- Harley, Dave and Geraldine Fitzpatrick. 2009. Creating a Conversational Context through Video Blogging: A Case Study of Geriatric1927. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 25(3):679- 689.
- Haugen, Einar. 1950. The Analysis of Linguistic Borrowing. *Language*, 26(2): 210-231.
- Hauser, Gerard. 1998. Vernacular Dialogue and the Rhetoricity of Public Opinion. *Communication Monographs*, 65(2):83-107.
- Heller, Monica. 1988. *Codeswitching: Anthropological and Sociolinguistic Perspectives*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Herring, Susan (Ed.) 1996. *Computer-mediated communication: Linguistic, social and cross-cultural perspectives*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Herring, Susan. 1999. Interactional coherence in CMC. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 4(4). <http://jcmc.indiana.edu/vol4/issue4/herring.html>
- Herring, Susan. 2001. Computer-mediated discourse. In D. Schiffrin, D. Tannen, and H. Hamilton (Eds.), *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis* (pp. 612-634). Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- Herring, Susan. 2002. Computer-mediated communication on the Internet. *Annual*

*Review of Information Science and Technology*, 36, 109-168.

- Herring, Susan. 2004. Computer-Mediated Discourse Analysis: An Approach to Researching Online Behaviour. In S.A. Barab, R. Kling & J. Gray (Eds.), *Designing for Virtual Communities in the Service of Learning*, New York: Cambridge University Press, pp. 338-376 [pre-print accessed online]
- Herring, Susan. 2007. A Faceted Classification Scheme for Computer-Mediated Discourse. *Language@Internet*, 4, article 1.  
<http://www.languageatinternet.de/articles/2007/761>
- Herring, Susan. 2010. Web Content Analysis: Expanding the Paradigm. In J. Hunsinger, M. Allen, & L. Klastrup (Eds.), *The International Handbook of Internet Research*. Berlin: Springer Verlag, pp. 233-249.  
Preprint: <http://ella.slis.indiana.edu/~herring/webca.preprint.pdf>
- Hess, Natalie. 1996. Code switching and Style Shifting as Markers of Liminality in Literature. *Language and Literature* 5(1): 5-18.
- Hewitt, Roger. 1986. *White Talk, Black Talk: Inter-Racial Friendship and Communication amongst Adolescents*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hill, Jane and Kenneth Hill. 1986. *Speaking Mexicano: The Dynamics of Syncretic Language in Central Mexico*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.
- Hill, Jane. 1995. Mock Spanish: a site for the indexical reproduction of racism in American English. Language and culture Web site.  
<http://www.language-culture.org/colloquia/symposia/hill-jane>
- Hinrichs, Lars. 2006. *Codeswitching on the Web: English and Jamaican Creole in E-mail Communication*. Amsterdam / Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Holly, Werner. 2000. Was sind "Neue Medien" – was sollen "Neue Medien" sein? In Zusammenarbeit mit den rojektleitern und Mitarbeitern der Projekte der Chemnitzer DFG-Forschergruppe "Neue Medien im Alltag". IN: Günter G. Voß et al. (eds). *Neue Medien im Alltag. Begriffsbestimmungen eines interdisziplinären Forschungsfeldes*. Opladen: Leske und Buderich. 79-106.
- Honeycutt, C., & Herring, S. C. 2009. Beyond microblogging: Conversation and collaboration via Twitter. *Proceedings of the Forty-Second Hawai'i International Conference on System Sciences*. Los Alamitos, CA: IEEE Press.
- Ifukor, Presley. 2005. Modelling the Mapping Mechanism in Metaphors. *Journal of Cognitive Science* 6:21-44.
- Ifukor, Presley. 2006. Sociolinguistic Variation in Second Language Competence: English Prepositional Usage among Nigerian Bilinguals. In: M. Vliegen (Ed.), *Variation in Sprachtheorie und Spracherwerb*. Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 133-

- Ifukor, Presley. 2008. Face Claims in Weblogs. Paper presented at the *First Triennial Conference of the International Society for the Linguistics of English (ISLE)*, University of Freiburg, Germany, October 8 – 11.
- Ifukor, Presley. 2009a. Code-switching as Facework in Computer-Mediated Discourse. Paper presented at the *American Association for Applied Linguistics (AAAL) annual conference*, Denver, USA, March 21-24.
- Ifukor, Presley. 2009b. Identity Representation in Multilingual Electronic Communication: Implications for Teaching English in Multicultural Contexts. Paper presented at the *3rd International Langscape Conference*, University of Vechta, Germany, December 3 – 5.
- Ifukor, Presley. 2010. “Elections” or “Selections”? Blogging and Twittering the Nigerian 2007 General Elections. *Bulletin of Science, Technology and Society* 30(6): 398 – 414.
- Ifukor, Presley. (In press/2011a). Linguistic Marketing in ‘... a marketplace of ideas’: Language Choice and Intertextuality in a Nigerian Virtual Community. *Pragmatics and Society* (Accepted for publication in December 2010).
- Ifukor, Presley. 2011b. #EkitiElection: The Acts and Facts of Twittering the Final Judicial Proceedings in Nigeria. Paper accepted for presentation at *General Online Research 11*, Heinrich-Heine University of Düsseldorf, March 14-16.
- Ifukor, Presley. 2011c. Towards the Emergence of Technolectal Nigerian English. Paper accepted for presentation at the *International Society for the Linguistics of English (ISLE)*, Boston, June 17-21.
- Ifukor, Presley. Submitted. Spelling and Simulated Shibboleths in Nigerian Computer-Mediated Communication.
- Ifukor, Presley. Under Review. Code switching and Facework in Nigerian Online Discourse. To appear in: R. Taiwo & I. Chilwa (Eds.) *Computer-Mediated Discourse in Africa*.
- Igboanusi, Herbert. 2008. Empowering Nigerian Pidgin: A Challenge for Status Planning? *World Englishes* 27(1): 68-82.
- Ingrid, Piller. 2003. Advertising as a Site of Language Contact. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 23: 170-83 .
- International Telecommunication Union. 2010. 2009 Country Data for Key Telecommunication/ICT Indicators.  
<http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/icteye/Indicators/Indicators.aspx>

- Ivkovic, Dejan and Heather Lotherington. 2009. Multilingualism in Cyberspace: Conceptualizing the Virtual Linguistic Landscape. *International Journal of Multilingualism* 6 (1):1-20.
- Jaffe, A. 2000. Introduction: Non-standard Orthography and Non-standard Speech. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 4(4): 497-513.
- Jenks, C., & Firth, A. (In press/2011). On the interactional character of synchronous voice-based computer-mediated communication. In S. C. Herring, D. Stein, & T. Virtanen (Eds.), *Handbook of the pragmatics of computer-mediated communication*. Berlin: Mouton.
- Jones, Kathryn. 1995. Code-switching, Intertextuality and Hegemony: Exploring Change in Bilingual Discourse. In *Proceedings of Summer School, Code-Switching and Language Contact*, Ljouwert / Leeuwarden, Fryske Academy & University of Wales Press, pp. 108-118.
- Jonathan, Goodluck. 2010. *My Friends and I : Conversations on policy and governance via facebook*. Lagos: GDP Associates Ltd.
- Jones, Steven (Ed). 1995. *CyberSociety: Computer-Mediated Communication and Community*. London/New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Kamberelis, George and Karla Scott. 1992. Other People's voices: The Coarticulation of Texts and Subjectivities. *Linguistics and Education* 4: 359-403
- Kamwangamalu, Nkonko. 1992. Mixers' and mixing : English across cultures. *World Englishes*, 11(2/3): 173 - 181
- Kamwangamalu, Nkonko. 1998. We-codes, they-codes, and codes-in-between: Identities of English and codeswitching in post-apartheid South Africa. *Multilingua*, 17(2/3): 277- 296.
- Kehinde, Ayo. 2010. Rulers against Writers, Writers against Rulers: The Failed Promise of the Public Sphere in Postcolonial Nigerian Fiction. *Lumina* 21(1):1-31.
- Koch, Peter and Wulf Oesterreicher. 1994. Schriftlichkeit und Sprache. In Hartmut Günther and Otto Ludwig (eds.) *Writing and its Use. An Interdisciplinary Handbook of International Research* (volume 1). Berlin and New York: De Gruyter. 587–604.
- Kristeva, Julia. 1969. Bakhtine, le mot, le dialogue et le roman. *Recherches pour une sémanalyse*, 143-173, Paris: Seuil.
- Kristeva, Julia. 1986. Word, dialogue and novel. In T. Moi (Ed.), *The Kristeva Reader*. Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 35-61.
- Lakoff, George and Mark Johnson. 1980. *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago: Chicago

University Press.

- Landry, Rodrigue and Richard Bourhis. 1997. Linguistic Landscape and Ethnolinguistic Vitality: An Empirical Study. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology* 16(1): 23-49.
- Le Page, Robert and Andrée Tabouret-Keller. 1985. *Acts of Identity: Creole-Based Approaches to Language and Ethnicity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Leopold W. 1930. Polarity in Language. In Curme *Volume of Linguistics Studies*, Baltimore, Waverly Press, pp.102-109.
- Lieberman, J. Nina. 1977. *Playfulness: Its Relation to Imagination and Creativity*. New York: Academic Press.
- Llamas, Carmen and Dominic Watt. (Eds). 2010. *Language and Identities*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Ludwig, Mark and Gene Gilmore. 2005. *Modern News Editing*. Ames, Iowa : Blackwell Publishing.
- Marcocchia, Michel. 2004. On-line Polylogues: Conversation Structure and Participation Framework in Internet Newsgroups. *Journal of Pragmatics* 36:115-145.
- Mardh, I. 1980. *Headlines: On the Grammar of English Front Page Headlines*. Lund: CWK Gleerup.
- Martin, Elizabeth. 2002. Mixing English in French Advertising. *World Englishes* 21 (3): 375-401.
- McLellan, James. 2005. Malay-English Language Alternation in Two Brunei Darussalam On-line Discussion Forums. Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Curtin University of Technology.
- Meinl, Marja. 2010. *Electronic Complaints: An Empirical Study on British and German Complaints on eBay*. Doctoral Dissertation, Rheinischen Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität zu Bonn.
- Mendoza-Denton, Norma. 2002. Language and Identity. In J.K. Chambers, P. Trudgill and N.Schilling-Estes (eds) *The Handbook of Language Variation and Change*, pp. 475–99. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Michel, Jean-Baptiste, Yuan Kui Shen, Aviva Presser Aiden, Adrian Veres, Matthew K. Gray, The Google Books Team, Joseph P. Pickett, Dale Hoiberg, Dan Clancy, Peter Norvig, Jon Orwant, Steven Pinker, Martin A. Nowak, and Erez Lieberman Aiden. 2011. Quantitative Analysis of Culture Using Millions of Digitized Books. *Science* 331 [Published online ahead of print: 16/Dec/2010].

- Milroy, Lesley and Pieter Muysken. 1995. *One Speaker, Two Languages: Cross Disciplinary Perspectives on Code-switching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mischaud, E. 2007. Twitter: Expressions of the whole self. An investigation into user appropriation of a web-based communications platform. London: Media@lse.  
[http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/media@lse/mediaWorkingPapers/MScDissertationSeries/Mischaud\\_final.pdf](http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/media@lse/mediaWorkingPapers/MScDissertationSeries/Mischaud_final.pdf)
- Montes-Alcalá, Cecilia. Written Code-switching: Powerful Bilingual Images. R. Jacobson (ed.) *Codeswitching Worldwide II*. Berlin: Mouton, pp. 59-74.
- Montes-Alcalá, Cecilia. 2007. Blogging in Two Languages: Code-Switching in Bilingual Blogs. J. Holmquist, A. Lorenzino and L. Sayahi (Eds.), *Selected Proceedings of the Third Workshop on Spanish Sociolinguistics*, 162-170. Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Proceedings Project.
- Moran, Ben. 2000. *Nigerian Identity Formations in the Usenet Newsgroup soc.culture.nigeria*, Occasional Papers, Centre of African Studies, Edinburgh University.
- Mühlhäusler, Peter. 1986. *Pidgin and Creole Linguistics*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- Myers-Scotton, Carol. 1983. The Negotiation of Identities in Conversation: A theory of Markedness and Code choice. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 44:115-36.
- Myers-Scotton, Carol. 1993. *Social motivations for codeswitching: Evidence from Africa*. Oxford: Clarendon Press for Oxford University Press.
- Nigerian Communications Commission. Quarterly Summary of Telephone Subscribers in Nigeria (January 2009- December 2009).  
[http://www.ncc.gov.ng/industrystatistics/subscriberdata\\_files/Subscriber\\_Data\\_Quarterly\\_Summary\\_200903-00912.pdf](http://www.ncc.gov.ng/industrystatistics/subscriberdata_files/Subscriber_Data_Quarterly_Summary_200903-00912.pdf)
- Nigerian Village Square ... a marketplace of ideas. URL:  
[www.nigeriavillagesquare.com](http://www.nigeriavillagesquare.com)
- Nir, Raphael. 1993. A Discourse Analysis of News Headlines. *Hebrew Linguistics* 37:23-31 (in Hebrew).
- Nurmi, Arja and Päivi Pahta. 2004. Social Stratification and Patterns of Code-switching in Early English Letters. *Multilingua* 23:417-456.
- Nwagbara, Uzoechi. 2010. The Nigerian Press, The Public Sphere and Sustainable Development: Engaging the Post Amnesty Deal in the Niger Delta. *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa* 12(3): 14-27.

- Nzekwu, Onuora. 1961. *Wand of Noble Wood*. London: Hutchinson of London.
- O'Reilly, Tim. 2007. What Is Web 2.0? Design Patterns and Business Models for the Next Generation of Software. Available at: <http://oreilly.com/web2/archive/what-is-web-20.html>
- Obadare, Ebenezer. 2006. Playing Politics with the Mobile Phone: Civil Society, Big Business and the State in Nigeria. *Review of African Political Economy* 107: 93 – 111.
- Ofulue, Christine. 2008. Interconnectivity in 'Other Tongues': A Sociolinguistic Study of SMS text Messages in Yoruba. *Issues in Intercultural Communication* 1(2): 189 – 200.
- Ofulue, Christine. 2010. Advance Fee Fraud (419) Scams: A Digital Forensic Analysis. In R. Taiwo (ed.) *Handbook of Research on Discourse Behaviour and Digital Communication: Language Structures and Social Interaction*. Philadelphia, Pa : IGI Publishers. pp. 296-317.
- Olatunji, Michael. 2007. Yabis: A Phenomenon in the Contemporary Nigerian Music. *Journal of Pan African Studies* 9(1) <http://www.jpanafrican.com/docs/vol1no9/Yabis.pdf>
- Omole, James. 1987. Code-switching in Soyinka's *The Interpreters*. *Language and Style*, 20(4): 385-395.
- Omoniyi, Tope. 2005. Towards A Retheorization of Code Switching. *TESOL Quarterly* 39(4):729-734.
- Omoniyi, Tope. 2006. Hip-hop Through the World Englishes Lens: A Response to Globalization. *World Englishes* 25(2):195-208.
- Oni, Wale and Niyi Osunbade. 2009. Pragmatic Force in Synchronous Computer-Mediated Communication in Nigeria. In Akin Odeunmi, Arua E. Arua & Sailal Arimi (Eds.) *Language, Gender and Politics, A Festschrift for Yisa Kehinde Yusuf*. Lagos: Concept Publications Limited, pp. 354-376.
- Onysko, Alexander. 2006. English Codeswitching in the German Newsmagazine *Der Spiegel*. *Innovation and Continuity in Language and Communication of Different Language Cultures*. R. Muhr (ed.). Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang. 261-90.
- Onysko, Alexander. 2007. *Anglicisms in German: Borrowing, Lexical Productivity and Written Codeswitching*. Berlin, New York: de Gruyter.
- Opeibi, Tunde. 2007. One message, Many Tongues: An exploration of Media Multilingualism in Nigerian Political Discourse. *Journal of Language and*



*Politics* 6(2):223–248.

- Opeibi, Babatunde. 2009. *Discourse, Politics and the 1993 Presidential Election Campaigns in Nigeria*. Lagos: Nouvelle Communications Ltd.
- Paolillo, John. 1999. The virtual Speech Community: Social Network and Language Variation on IRC. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*. <http://jcmc.indiana.edu/vol4/issue4/paolillo.html>
- Paolillo, John. 2001. Language variation on Internet Relay Chat: A social network approach. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 5(2): 180-213.
- Papacharissi, Zizi. 2002. The Virtual Sphere: The Internet as a Public Sphere. *New Media & Society* 4(1): 9-27.
- Pennycook, Alastair. 1994. The Politics of Pronouns. *ELTJ* 48(2): 173-178.
- Pennycook, Alastair. 2007. *Global Englishes and Transcultural Flows*. London: Routledge.
- Puschmann, Cornelius. 2010. *The Corporate Blog as an Emerging Genre of Computer-Mediated Communication: Features, Constraints, Discourse Situation*. Göttingen: Universitätsverlag Göttingen.
- Pyramid Research. 2010. The Impact of Mobile Services in Nigeria: How Mobile Technologies are Transforming Economic and Social Activities. Presentation in Abuja, Nigeria. March 16.
- Rampton, Ben. 1995. *Crossing: Language and Ethnicity among Adolescents*. London: Longman.
- Rampton, Ben. (ed.) 1999. Styling the Other. Special Issue of *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 3(4): 421-556.
- Rampton, Ben and C. Charalambous. 2010. *Crossing: A Review of Research*. Working Papers in Urban Language & Literacies # 58.
- Ronkin, Maggie and Helen Karn. 1999. Mock Ebonics: linguistic racism in parodies of Ebonics on the Internet. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 3(3):360–380.
- Searle, John. 1969. *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Searle, John. 1976. A Classification of Illocutionary Acts. *Language in Society* 5:1-23.
- Searle, John. 2003. Social Ontology and Political Power. In F. F. Schmitt (Ed.), *Socializing Metaphysics. The Nature of Social Reality* (pp. 195-210). Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield.

- Searle, John. and Daniel Vanderveken. 1985. *Foundations of Illocutionary Logic*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sebba, Mark. 2003. 'Spelling rebellion'. In J. Androutsopoulos and A. Georgakopoulou (eds.), *Discourse Constructions of Youth Identities*. Amsterdam: Benjamins, pp. 151–72.
- Sebba, Mark. 2007a. *Spelling and Society: The Culture and Politics of Orthography around the World*. Cambridge University Press.
- Sebba, Mark. 2007b. Identity and language construction in an online community: the case of 'Ali G'. In P. Auer (ed.) *Style and Social Identities: Alternative Approaches to Linguistic Heterogeneity*. Berlin/New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 361-392.
- Sebba, Mark. 2009a. Sociolinguistic approaches to writing systems research. *Writing Systems Research* 1(1):35-49.
- Sebba, Mark. 2009b. 'Unregulated Spaces'. Plenary, Language Policy and Language Learning: New Paradigms and New Challenges, University of Limerick, June 18-20.
- Sebba, Mark & Tony Wootton. 1998. We, They and Identity: Sequential vs. Identity-related Explanation in Code-switching. In: P. Auer (Ed.), *Codeswitching in Conversation*. London: Routledge, 262 – 289.
- Sebba, Mark & Shirley Tate. 2002. “Global” and “Local” Identities in the Discourses of British-born Caribbeans. *International Journal of Bilingualism* 6(1): 75 – 89.
- Sebba, Mark, Shahrzad Mahootian and Carla Jonsson (Eds.). 2011. *Language Mixing and Code-Switching in Writing: Approaches to Mixed-Language Written Discourse*. London: Routledge.
- Siebenhaar, Beat. 2006. Code choice and Code-switching in Swiss-German Internet Relay Chat rooms. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 10(4): 481-506.
- Smith, Marc and Peter Kollock (Eds.). 1999. *Communities in Cyberspace*. London/New York: Routledge.
- Sperlich, Wolfgang. 2005. Will Cyberforums Save Endangered Languages? A Niuean Case Study. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 172:51-77.
- Spilioti, Tereza. 2009. Graphemic Representation of Text-Messaging: Alphabet-Choice and Code-Switches in Greek SMS. *Pragmatics*, 19(3):393-412.
- Stein, Dieter. 2005. Distanz und Nähe in interaktiver Internetkommunikation. In M. Beißwenger and A. Storrer (eds.) *Chat-Kommunikation in Beruf, Bildung und*

*Medien: Konzepte – Werkzeuge – Anwendungsfelder*. Stuttgart, Germany:  
Ibidem. 339–347.

Stenström, Anna-Brita. 1994. *An Introduction to Spoken Interaction*. Harlow: Longman.

Stetson, R. H. 1937. The Phoneme and the Grapheme. *Mélange de Linguistique et de Philologie Offerts a. J van Ginneken*.

Suzanne, Romaine. 2002. Signs of Identity, Signs of Discord: Glottal Goofs and the Green Grocer's Glottal in Debates on Hawaiian orthography. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 12(2):189-225.

Sveningsson, Malin. 2002. Cyberlove. Creating Romantic Relationships on the Net. In: J. Fornäs, K. Klein, M. Ladendorf, J. Sundén & M. Sveningsson (Eds.) *Digital Borderlands: Cultural Studies of Identity and Interactivity on the Internet*. Amherst: Peter Lang Publishing.

Sweetland, J. 2002. Unexpected but Authentic Use of an Ethnically-Marked Dialect. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 6(4): 514–36.

Taiwo, Rotimi. 2004. Speech as Headline in Nigerian Newspapers. In S. Awonusi and E.A. Babalola (Eds.) *The Domestication of English in Nigeria*, Lagos: University of Lagos Press, pp. 323-335.

Taiwo, Rotimi. 2008. Linguistic forms and functions of SMS text messages in Nigeria. In S. Kelsey & K. St. Amant (Eds), *Handbook of Research on Computer Mediated Communication*. Hershey & New York: Information Science Reference, pp. 969 – 982.

Taiwo, Rotimi. 2010a. Discourse Features in Nigerian Online Discussion Forums. In P. Jung-ran & E. G. Abels (Eds), *Interpersonal Relations and Social Patterns in Communication Technologies: Discourse Norms. Language Structures and Cultural Variables*. Philadelphia, Pa: IGI Global Publishers, pp 185 – 201.

Taiwo, Rotimi. 2010b. Social Identity and Discursive Practices in Nigerian Online Forums. In Nnamdi Ekeanyanwu & Chinedu Okeke (Eds.) *Indigenous Societies and Cultural Globalization in the 21st Century*. Leipzig: VDM Verlag. 70-91.

Tauli V. 1958. *The structural Tendencies of Languages*. Helsinki, s.e.

Thibault, Paul. 1994. Intertextuality. In R. E. Asher (Ed.), *The Encyclopaedia of Language and Linguistics*, Vol. 4. Oxford: Pergamon Press.

Thurlow, Crispin. 2003. Generation txt? Exposing the sociolinguistics of young people's text-messaging. *Discourse Analysis Online* 1: 1.  
<http://www.shu.ac.uk/daol/articles/v1/n1/a3/thurlow2002003-paper.html>

- Thurlow, Crispin. 2006. From statistical panic to moral panic: The metadiscursive construction and popular exaggeration of new media language in the print media. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 11: 3.  
<http://jcmc.indiana.edu/vol11/issue3/thurlow.html>
- Touraine, Alain. 1998. *What is Democracy?* (Translated by D. Macey), Oxford: Westview Press.
- Turner, Victor. 1967. *The Liminal Period in Rites of Passage, in The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- van Dijk, Teun. 1988. *News as Discourse*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.
- Vermeij, Lotte. 2004. “Ya know what I’m sayin’?” The double meaning of language crossing among teenagers in the Netherlands. *International Journal of Sociology & Language*. 170: 141–168
- von Münchow, Patricia and Florimond Rakotonoelina. 2010. Questions and Explanations in French and Anglo-American Usenet Newsgroups. *Discourse Studies* 12(3):311-329.
- Walther, Joseph. 1992. Interpersonal Effects in Computer-Mediated Interaction: A Relational Perspective. *Communication Research*, 19 (1):52-90.
- Warschauer, Mark. 2002. Languages.com: The Internet and Linguistic Pluralism. In I. Snyder (Ed.), *Silicon Literacies: Communication, Innovation and Education in the Electronic Age*, 62 – 74, London: Routledge.
- Warschauer, Mark and Douglas Grimes. 2007. Audience, Authorship and Artefact: The Emergent Semiotics of Web 2.0. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics* 27: 1-23.
- Weinreich, Uriel. 1953. *Languages in Contact*. The Hague: Mouton.
- Werry, C. M. 1996. Linguistic and interactional features of Internet Relay Chat. In S. C. Herring (Ed.), pp. 47-63.
- Yates, S. J. 1996. Oral and written linguistic aspects of computer conferencing. In S. C. Herring (Ed.), pp. 29-46.
- Zipf, G. K. 1949. *Human Behavior and the Principle of Least Effort*. Cambridge, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Zitzen, Michaela. 2004. *Topic Shift Markers in Asynchronous and Synchronous Computer-Mediated Communication*. Doctoral Dissertation, Heinrich-Heine Universität, Düsseldorf.
- Zitzen, Michaela and Dieter Stein. 2004. Chat and conversation. A case of transmedial stability? *Linguistics*, 42(5):983-1021.

# Appendices

Coding scheme for Questionnaire Responses

Qs	Description	Code	Remarks
1	Gender	Male = 1 Female = 0	
2	Age Range	Below 13 = 1 13-19 = 2 20-24 = 3 25-29 = 4 30-34 = 5 35-39 = 6 40 and above = 7	
3	State of Origin	Anambra = 1 Enugu = 2 Akwa Ibom = 3 Adamawa = 4 Abia = 5 Bauchi = 6 Bayelsa = 7 Benue = 8 Borno = 9 Cross River = 10 Delta = 11 Ebonyi = 12 Edo = 13 Ekiti = 14 Gombe = 15 Imo = 16 Jigawa = 17 Kaduna = 18 Kano = 19 Katsina = 20 Kebbi = 21 Kogi = 22 Kwara = 23 Lagos = 24 Nasarawa = 25 Niger = 26 Ogun = 27 Ondo = 28 Osun = 29 Oyo = 30 Plateau = 31 Rivers = 32 Sokoto = 33 Taraba = 34	Not strictly alphabetically arranged

		Yobe = 35 Zamfara = 36	
4	Ethnic Group	Hausa = 1 Igbo = 2 Yoruba = 3 Others = 0	
5	Education		This is not coded because respondents are mainly undergraduates with a few postgraduate students; hence the minimal qualification is Secondary School Certificate Examination (SSCE) O' Level
6	Institution		This is also not a determinant factor for this study and thus not coded
7	Language Literacy		
	Hausa	If ticked (i.e. Yes) = 1	
	Igbo		
	Yoruba	If not ticked (i.e. No) = 0	
	Nig Pidgin		
Others			
8	Place of Internet Access		
	Cybercafé	If ticked (i.e. Yes) = 1	
	Home	If not ticked (i.e. No) = 0	
	Work		
	Mobile / Wireless Device		
Other			
9	Means of Internet Access		
	Desktop	If ticked (i.e. Yes) = 1	
	Mobile / Blackberry	If not ticked (i.e. No) = 0	

	Personal laptop		
	Rented device		
	Other		
10	SMS sent daily	0 = 1 1 = 2 2 = 3 3 = 4 4 = 5 5 = 6 6-10 = 7 >10 = 8	
11	Language choice in SMS writing	English ONLY = 1 English + Yoruba = 2 English + Pidgin = 3 English + Igbo = 4 English + Hausa = 5 Nig Pidgin = 6 Others = 7	
12	Email activities	Read only = 1 Read and Write = 2 Write Only = 3 Not applicable = 4	Blank choice is interpreted as not applicable
13	Facebook activities	Read only = 1 Read and Write = 2 Write Only = 3 Not applicable = 4	
14	Twitter / NaijaPulse activities	Read only = 1 Read and Write = 2 Write Only = 3 Not applicable = 4	
15	Blogging	Read only = 1 Read and Write = 2 Write Only = 3 Not applicable = 4	
16	Online newspaper	Read only = 1 Read and Write = 2 Write Only = 3 Not applicable = 4	
17	Online discussion forums	Read only = 1 Read and Write = 2 Write Only = 3 Not applicable = 4	
18	Instant messaging /	Very often = 1	



	Web chat	Not often = 2 Often = 3 Not at all = 4	
19	Sourcing for academic / professional information	Very often = 1 Not often = 2 Often = 3 Not at all = 4	
20	Impact of the time spent online on studies	Very positively = 1 Very negatively = 2 Positively = 3 Negatively = 4 I don't know = 5	
21	How NIGERIA is written in SMS & online discourse	9ja = 1 9geria = 2 Naija = 3 Nija = 4 Nigeria = 5	
22	Reasons for Qs 21	Writing space restriction Freedom of expression It feels cool Receiver(s) understand(s) the message Appropriateness Others	If ticked (i.e. Yes) = 1 If not ticked (i.e. No) = 0
23	Reasons for shortenings	Writing space restriction Freedom of expression It feels cool Receiver(s) understand(s) the message Others	If ticked (i.e. Yes) = 1 If not ticked (i.e. No) = 0
24	Regional accent influence on writing “H-interest”	Edo = 1 Efik = 2 Hausa = 3 Igbo = 4 Yoruba = 5	For Qs 24 – 30 wherever “0” was used for the coding means that the question was not answered or more than one option was given but this is not thought to affect the outcome in any way
25	Regional accent	Edo = 1	

	influence on writing “Pic <b>SH</b> ur”	Efik = 2 Hausa = 3 Igbo = 4 Yoruba = 5	
26	Regional accent influence on writing “ <b>OYEL</b> money”	Edo = 1 Efik = 2 Hausa = 3 Igbo = 4 Yoruba = 5	
27	<b>R</b> awlence went to <b>R</b> ondon to study <b>R</b> aw	Edo = 1 Efik = 2 Hausa = 3 Igbo = 4 Yoruba = 5	
28	Regional accent influence on writing “ <b>F</b> olytechnic”	Edo = 1 Efik = 2 Hausa = 3 Igbo = 4 Yoruba = 5	
29	Regional accent influence on writing “ <b>P</b> ederal”	Edo = 1 Efik = 2 Hausa = 3 Igbo = 4 Yoruba = 5	
30	Regional accent influence on writing “ <b>oK</b> a”	Edo = 1 Efik = 2 Hausa = 3 Igbo = 4 Yoruba = 5	

# QUESTIONNAIRE FOR NIGERIANS

Dear Respondent,

This is a survey at the University of Osnabrueck, Germany investigating the social and linguistic practices of Nigerians in SMS text messaging and Internet communication. Please assist by answering **ALL** questions either by ticking the appropriate box or writing your answer as required. Your identity and responses are **ANONYMOUS**. Kindly fill the questionnaire honestly and objectively. Thank you.

## SECTION A

1. Gender:

- Male  
 Female

2. Age Range:

- Below 13  
 13 – 19  
 20 – 24  
 25 – 29  
 30 – 34  
 35 – 39  
 40 and above

3. State of Origin: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Ethnic Group: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Highest Educational Qualification

Obtained: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Name of your current institution of higher learning: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Please indicate ALL the languages you can both READ and WRITE:

- Hausa  
 Igbo  
 Yoruba  
 Nigerian Pidgin  
 Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

8. Where do you mainly gain access to the Internet?

- Cybercafé  
 At home  
 At work  
 On mobile phone / wireless devices  
 Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

9. Through which of the following means do you mostly browse the Internet?

- Desktop computer  
 On my mobile phone / BlackBerry  
 On my personal laptop  
 Using a borrowed / rented device  
 Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

10. How many SMS texts do you write or send in a day?

- 0  
 1  
 2  
 3  
 4  
 5  
 6 to 10  
 More than 10

11. In what language(s) do you normally write your SMS texts?

- English ONLY  
 English + Yoruba  
 English + Pidgin  
 Others (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_  
 English + Igbo  
 English + Hausa  
 Pidgin ONLY

## SECTION B

Which of the following activities do you engage in on the Internet? Only one answer is allowed, please.

12. EMAIL

- Read only  
 Read and write  
 Write only  
 Not Applicable

13. FACEBOOK

- Read only  
 Read and write  
 Write only  
 Not Applicable

14. TWITTER / NaijaPulse etc.

- Read only  
 Read and write  
 Write only  
 Not Applicable

15. BLOG / WEBLOGS

- Read only  
 Read and write  
 Write only  
 Not Applicable

16. NIGERIAN ONLINE NEWSPAPERS

- Read only  
 Read and write  
 Write only  
 Not Applicable

17. ONLINE DISCUSSION FORUMS

- Read only  
 Read and write  
 Write only  
 Not Applicable

18. INSTANT MESSAGING / WEB CHAT

- Very often  
 Not often  
 Often  
 Not at all

– Please Turn Over –

19. SOURCING FOR ACADEMIC RELATED / PROFESSIONAL INFORMATION

- Very often       Often
- Not often       Not at all

20. HOW DOES THE TIME YOU SPEND ONLINE AFFECT YOUR STUDIES /CAREER?

- Very positively       Positively
- Very negatively       Negatively
- I don't know (I've never thought about

it)

**SECTION C**

21. How do you mostly write NIGERIA in SMS and online communication?

- 9ja
- 9geria
- Naija
- Nija
- Nigeria

22. Which of the following best explains why you write the way you do in question 21 above? (More than one answer allowed)

- Writing space restriction
- Freedom to write the way I like
- It feels cool!
- The receiver(s) of the message understand(s) what I mean
- Appropriateness or correctness
- Other (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_

23. Then why would you also write THANKS as *tnx* , YOU as *U*, NEVER as *neva*, GREAT as *gr8*, PLEASE as *plz* in SMS and online communication? (More than one answer allowed)

- Space restriction
- Freedom to write the way I like
- It feels cool!
- The receiver(s) of the message understand(s) what I mean
- Other (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_

**QUESTIONS 24 – 30**

Which ethnic group is most likely to utter the following expressions AS WRITTEN below indicating the influence of regional accent?

24. **H**interest (i.e. for the standard spelling “interest”)

- Edo
- Efik / Ibibio
- Hausa
- Igbo

Yoruba

25. Pic**sh**ur (i.e. for the standard spelling “picture”)

- Edo
- Efik / Ibibio
- Hausa
- Igbo
- Yoruba

26. **oyel** money (i.e. for the standard spelling “oil”)

- Edo
- Efik / Ibibio
- Hausa
- Igbo
- Yoruba

27. **R**awlence went to **R**ondon to study **R**aw

(i.e. for “Lawrence went to London to study Law”)

- Edo
- Efik / Ibibio
- Hausa
- Igbo
- Yoruba

28. State **F**olytechnic (i.e. for the standard spelling “Polytechnic”)

- Edo
- Efik / Ibibio
- Hausa
- Igbo
- Yoruba

29. **F**ederal character (i.e. for the standard spelling “Federal”)

- Edo
- Efik / Ibibio
- Hausa
- Igbo
- Yoruba

30. **Ok**a madam (i.e. for the standard spelling “Ògá”)

- Edo
- Efik / Ibibio
- Hausa
- Igbo
- Yoruba

**GENERAL COMMENTS (OPTIONAL)**

Do you have any additional comment or observation? Please write below:

---



---



---

**Many thanks for your time and responses.**